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SERMONS

Upon the following *Subjects*,

VIZ.

The *Divinity* of JESUS CHRIST.

The *Millenium*.

The *Wisdom of God, in the Permission of Sin.*

By JOSEPH BELLAMY, A.M.
Minister of the Gospel at *Bethlem*.

I bring you good Tidings of great Joy. LUKE ii. 10.

Light is sown for the Righteous, and Gladness for the Upright in Heart. PSALM XCVII. 11.

—There was a thick Darkness in all the Land of Egypt— But all the Children of Israel had Light in their Dwellings. EXOD. X. 22, 23.

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Div. S.

And, as Jesus Christ appears "in the Form of God" in the *first Chapter* of *Genesis*, calling universal Nature out of Nothing into Existence; so likewise does he appear, and act, and speak, as thinking it "no Robbery to be equal with God," in all the grand Dispensations of divine Providence, from the Calling of *Abraham*, and forward, thro' all the *Jewish Dispensation*.

Turn to the *third Chapter* of *Exodus*, at the beginning, and there you may see, "the Angel of the "Lord appeared to Moses, in a Flame of Fire out "of the midst of a Bush, ‡ and God called unto "him out of the Bush, and said, I am the God of "thy Father, the God of Abraham, the God of "Isaac, and the God of Jacob." Now who was this God, that thus spake to Moses? It was plainly the God who had appeared to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; and to whom they had built Altars, and whom they had worshipped. To Jacob, in particular, as he was going

‡ "Not a created Angel, but the Angel of the Covenant, Christ "Jesus, who then and ever was God, and was to be Man, "and to be sent into the World in our Flesh, as a Mes- "senger from God. And these temporary Apparitions of "his, were Presages or Fore-runners of his more solemn "Mission and Coming, and therefore he is stly called an "Angel. That this Angel was no Creature, plainly ap- "pears by the whole Context, and especially by his saying, "*I am the Lord*, &c. The Angels never speak that Lan- "guage in Scripture: but, *I am sent from God*, and *I am "thy Fellow-Servant*, &c. And it is a vain Pretence, to "say, That the Angel as God's Ambassador speaks in "God's Name and Person. For what Ambassador of any "King in the World did ever speak thus, *I am the King*, "&c. Ministers are God's Ambassadors; but if any of "them should say, *I am the Lord*, they would be guilty "of Blasphemy; and so would any created Angel too, "for the same Reason." *Pool in Loc.*

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going to Padan-Aram. *Gen.* XXVIII. 12, 13. "He "dreamed, and behold, a Ladder ſet upon the Earth, "and the Top of it reached to Heaven: and the "Angels of God [theſe were created Angels] aſcend- "ing and deſcending on it. And behold, the LORD "[this was the ſupreme God] ſtood above it, and "ſaid, I am the Lord God of Abraham thy Father, "and the God of Iſaac: the Land whereon thou "lieſt, to thee will I give it, and to thy Seed, &c. And "Jacob called the Name of that Place Bethel," i. e. the Houſe of God, ver. 19. "And he anointed a "Pillar, and vowed a Vow, ſaying, If God will be "with me, &c. then ſhall the Lord be my God"— ver. 20,—22. And when he was at Padan-Aram the ſame God appeared to him again, and is called the *Angel* of God. *Gen.* XXXI. "And the Angel of God "ſpake to me in a Dream". ver. 11. This was not a created Angel; for he ſaid, *ver.* 13. "I am the God "of Bethel, where thou anointedſt the Pillar, and "vowedſt a Vow unto ME." † And to this God he afterwards

† *GOD the Father* is never called the *Angel of God*: But the *God of Bethel* is called the *Angel of God*: Therefore the *God of Bethel* is not *God the Father*.——The *God of Bethel* is the ſame who is called the *Angel of the Covenant* in *Mal.* III. 1. But that *Angel of the Covenant* is *Chriſt*, as is plain from *Mark* I. 2. Therefore the *God of Bethel* was *Chriſt*.—The *God of Bethel* was the God who appeared to Abraham (*Gen.* XII. 1,—7.) to Iſaac (*Gen.* XXVI. 24, 25.) to Jacob (*Gen.* XXVIII. 13. and XXXI. 13.) to Moſes (Exod. III. 2, —6.) on Mount Sinai (*Exod.* XX. 2.) and is uſually called the *God and King of Iſrael*, thro' the old Teſtament: But the *God of Bethel* was *Jeſus Chriſt*: Therefore *Jeſus Chriſt* was the *God* and *King of Iſrael*.— If Jeſus Chriſt was the *God* and *King of Iſrael*, then may St. Paul be juſtified in repreſenting him as the Creator of the Univerſe, Col. I. 16. And in applying to him, in his Epiſtles,

afterwards *built an Altar* (*Chap.* XXXV. 1.) and he calls upon *this God, this Angel*, to *bless the Lads* (the two Sons of Joseph) a little before his Death. (*Chap.* 48. 15, 16.)——Now, who was this, sometimes called *God*, sometimes the *Angel of God?* It was, if we may give Credit to his own Declaration, "The God of "Abraham (*Chap.* XXVIII. 13.) and the God "of Isaac."——And this was the God who now appeared and spake to Moses in the Bush, and who afterwards gave the Law from Mount Sinai. And of him, even of this very same God, David speaks in the LXVIIIth *Psalm*, ver. 7, &c. "O God, when "thou wentest forth before thy People, when thou "didst march thro' the Wilderness; the Earth shook, "the Heavens also dropped at the Presence of the "Lord: even Sinai itself was moved at the Presence "of God, the God of Israel. ver. 17.—The Chariots of "God are twenty Thousand, even Thousands of "Angels; the Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the "holy Place, *ver.* 18. Thou hast ascended on high, "thou hast led Captivity captive, thou hast received "Gifts for Men," &c.——And now, who was this? ——Turn to the IVth *Chapter* of *Ephesians*, and there an inspired Apostle tells us, that it was Jesus Christ. *ver.* 8. It was He "Who ascended up on high, and "led Captivity captive."

B So

Epistles, what was evidently spoken of the *God* and *King of Israel*, in the sacred Writings of the old Testament. Compare *Psal.* LXVIII. 18. with *Eph.* IV. 8. And *Psal.* CII. 25. with *Heb.* I. 10. &c. &c. &c.—And our blessed Saviour may be justified in laying down his Life, rather than to give up his Claim.——And there was more Truth in the Title set up over his Head when on the Cross (*Jesus of Nazareth the* KING OF THE JEWS) than his Crucifiers were aware of: For had they *known, they would not have crucified the* LORD OF GLORY.

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So that it was *Jeſus Chriſt*, who appeared to Abraham, Iſaac and Jacob, to Moſes in the Burning Buſh, and on Mount Sinai. And He appeared in the "Form of God," and ſpake in the Language of ſupreme Deity, as thinking it "no Robbery to be equal with God," ſaying, "I am the God of Abraham, the God "of Iſaac, and the God of Jacob. I am the Lord "thy God which brought thee out of the Land of "Egypt, and out of the Houſe of Bondage. Thou "ſhalt have no other Gods before me. *Exod.* XX.—And what could he have ſaid more than this——to ſet up thus for ſupreme God, and enjoin that none ſhould be worſhipped but himſelf!

And this God, who thus brought Iſrael out of Egypt, and gave the Law from Mount Sinai, even he was "the KING of the Jews," their *civil Chief*. For their Government was a *Theocracy*, and God was their KING, as King *George* is King of *Great-Britain*. And therefore when in the Days of Samuel, they deſired to have a King from among themſelves, like the Reſt of the Nations, God ſaid, (1 *Sam.* VIII. 7.) "They "have rejected ME, that I ſhould not REIGN over "them." (See alſo 1 *Sam.* X. 18, 19.) This was in their Hearts; for they were weary of God's Government, and did not like to be in a State of ſuch entire Dependance on him, but wanted a King of their own. However God did not give up his Government over them, nor grant them a King, in the Senſe they deſired; but only nominated and conſtituted one to be his Vice-gerent, to be his Deputy, to govern for and under him, therefore called *the Lord's anointed*, God himſelf ſtill their King.——Now it was at Mount Sinai God became their King, and they covenanted and promiſed to be his loyal and obedient Subjects. *Exod.* XIX. 3—8.——But *that God* was *Jeſus Chriſt*, as has been before proved.——Therefore *Jeſus Chriſt* was *the* KING *of the Jews*, and they were his peculiar

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People —— And to this St. John evidently alludes in those Words, *Joh.* I. 11. "He came to his own," his own People & Nation, over whom he had reigned, "He came unto his own, and his own received him "not." Yea, look up, and view him on the Cross, and read the Superscription put over him, and that will declare who he is, JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS. (See *Joh.* XII. 15. *Zech.* IX. 9.)

And as their God was their King, their civil Chief; so it was suitable he should have a *Palace* built him, that he might dwell among them. And accordingly by his Appointment the *Tabernacle* was built in the Wilderness. And there he dwelt, in the Holy of Holies, as their God and King, giving out Laws and Orders from above the Mercy-seat. In Allusion to which St. *John* speaking of the same God, says, "The "Word was made Flesh and tabernacled among us" (for so it is in the Original.) *Joh.* I. 14. —— And this God who thus dwelt in their Tabernacle, and whom they tempted and tried forty Years in the Wilderness, St. *Paul* testifies was *Jesus Christ.* 1 *Cor.* X. 9. "Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also "tempted, and were destroyed of Serpents." (See also *Isai.* LXIII. 9. Compared with *Exod.* XXIII. 20. and XXXIII. 14.)

AFTERWARDS, in the Days of Solomon, a *Temple* was built, exceeding grand and glorious; however, not equal to his infinite Greatness: for "the Hea- "ven, and the Heaven of Heavens could not contain "him." (1 *Kin.* VIII. 27.) But yet in this Temple he condescended to take up his Abode, "in the "Cloud of Glory which filled the House." (2 *Chron.* V. 14.) And there he dwelt as *God and King of the Jews.* *—— In Remembrance of which, and conscious

* Solomon, in his Prayer at the Dedication of the Temple, speaking to the God and King of Israel, said, "For thou, "even

to his own Dignity, our Saviour, in the Days of his Flesh, was filled with Indignation to see the Temple, once his holy Dwelling-Place, turned into an House of Merchandize, and he drove out the People.—And being questioned for this his Conduct, he answered, "Destroy this Temple (speaking of his Body) and in "three Days I will raise it up." *Joh.* II. 19. As if he had said, "I am the God who once dwelt in your "Temple, now I dwell in this Body, this is now my "Temple, destroy it, as I foresee you will, and in "three Days I will raise it from the Dead; and there-"by give you full Proof who I be, and by what "Authority I do these Things."

To Abraham he sometimes appeared as a *Man.* (*Gen.* XVIII. 1, 2.) To Moses, in a *Flame of Fire* in the Bush. To all the Host of Israel, in a *Pillar of Cloud* by Day and *of Fire* by Night, from the Time they went out of Egypt till they came to Mount Sinai. On the Mount He took up his Abode till the Tabernacle was built, and his Appearance was as *devouring Fire. Exod.* XXIV. 17. After the Tabernacle was built, that became the Place of his Residence; and in a *Pillar of Cloud* by Day and *of Fire* by Night, he led the Israelites thro' all the Wilderness, till he had brought them into the holy Land; and the Tabernacle was set up at Shiloh: (*Josh.* XVIII. 1.) and there He dwelt till the Days of Eli: (1 *Sam.* III.) when, for the Wickedness of the Children of Israel, He

"even thou ONLY knowest the Hearts of all the chil-"dren of Men." 1 *King.* VIII. 29. This being peculiar to the God of Israel. 1 *Sam.* XVI. 7. *Psal.* VII. 9. *Jer.* XI. 20. & XVII. 10. & XX. 12.—"And all the Churches "shall know, that I AM HE," says our blessed Saviour, "that I AM HE, which searcheth the Reins and Heart" *Rev.* II. 23. i. e. that I am that very Being, formerly known by the Name of the God of Israel, to whom *alone* this Character belonged. *All the Churches shall know it,*

He forsook Shiloh: (1 *Sam.* IV. *Psal.* LXXVIII. 60) as he afterwards did the Temple of Solomon. (*Jer.* VII. 14.) And after the *Babylonish* Captivity this Token of the divine Presence was never more seen. But the pious Jews were assured by the last *Prophet* under that Dispensation, after the building of the second Temple, that their *God* and *King* would return to their Temple again. *Mal.* III. 1. "The LORD whom ye seek," longing for his Presence as in former Days, "shall suddenly come to His Temple," where he used to dwell; "even the Messenger [or Angel] of the Covenant."—But when he "came unto his own, his own received "him not." (*Joh.* I. 11.) For his ancient Glory was laid aside, and he appeared in the Form of a Servant, and in the Likeness of Men. Wherefore they put him to Death for claiming to be "the Son of God "and King of the Jews;" not knowing that he was the LORD OF GLORY. 1 *Cor.* II. 8. See *Hag.* II. 7, 9.

BUT if we want any further Evidence, that Jesus Christ was indeed the very GOD and KING of Israel, let us turn to the VIth *Chapter* of Isaiah, where we shall find the *Prophet*, in a Vision, seeing "the LORD "sitting upon a Throne high and lifted up," as sole Monarch of the Universe, and worshipped by the heavenly Hosts as supreme God, crying, "Holy, "Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts, the whole Earth is "full of thy Glory."*—And then turn to the XIIth

* *Holy, Holy, Holy*, three Times. This Vision was a Vision of one God in three Persons. Of God the *Father*, *Rom.* XI. 8. Of God the *Son*, *Joh.* XII. 41. Of God the *Holy Ghost*, *Act.* XXVIII. 25. The THREE, who said, "Let US make Man in OUR Image," *Gen.* I. 26. Whose Name was pronounced *three* Times in the Old-Testament-Blessing. *Num.* VI. 24, 25, 26. As the *three* Persons are distinctly mentioned in the New-Testament-Baptism. *Mat.* XXVIII. 19. And in the New-Testament Blessing. 2 *Cor.* XIII.

Chapter of *John*, 41ſt Verſe, and we ſhall find, that this *God* was JESUS CHRIST. "Theſe Things" [viz. the Things contained in *Iſai.* VI. 9, 10] "ſaid "Eſaias, when he ſaw his Glory, and ſpake of him."

AND if we would ſee the ſame Thing confirmed over again, let us read the XLVth Chapter of *Iſaiah* throughout, where we have the SUPREME *God*, the *God of Iſrael*, ſaying, ver. 5. "I am the Lord, and "there is none elſe, there is no God beſides me.— "ver. 6. There is none beſides me: I am the Lord, "and there is none elſe.—ver. 11. Thus ſaith the "Lord, the HOLY ONE of Iſrael.—ver. 12. I have "made the Earth, and created Man upon it; I, "even my Hands have ſtretched out the Heavens.— "ver. 18. Thus ſaith the Lord, that created the "Heavens; God Himſelf, that formed the Earth "and made it; I am the Lord, and there is none "elſe.—ver. 21. There is no God elſe beſides me.— "ver. 22. Look unto me, and be ye ſaved, all the "Ends of the Earth; for I am God, and there is "none elſe."——And if after all this God-like Language, this was *Jeſus Chriſt*, St. *Paul* might well ſay, "Who being in the Form of God, thought it no "Robbery

XIII. 14.——And it is obſerved by an antient *Jewiſh Writer*, that in ſeveral Texts in the *Hebrew Bible* God is called by *three* Names. His Words are as follows. "Thus it is ſaid, *Exod.* XX. 5. I am the Lord thy God, a "jealous God. [JEHOVAH, ELOHIM, EL, are the Words "uſed] *Three*, anſwering to the *Three* by which the World "was made. And thus the Children of *Gad*, and the Children of *Reuben* ſay, *Joſh.* XXII 22. EL, ELOHIM, "JEHOVAH: EL, ELOHIM, JEHOVAH, *he knoweth.* "And why are theſe mentioned twice? Becauſe by them "the World was made, and becauſe by them the Law "was given." Thus far the Author of *Midraſh Tillim.* See Bp. *Kidder's Demonſtration of the Meſſiah.* Part III. *Fag.* 84.

" Robbery to be equal with God;" (nor can we have a plainer Comment on his Words, nor can we be at a Loss for their true Meaning) for he could not have appeared more as SUPREME GOD, nor possibly spoken in more decisive Language than this.*——And yet nothing can be plainer than that St. *Paul* understood the GOD speaking thro' the whole Chapter, to be *Jesus Christ*. For those concluding Words in the 23d Verse, " I have sworn by my self,—that unto me " every Knee shall bow, and every Tongue shall " swear," he twice expressly applies to *Jesus Christ*. Once in *Rom.* XIV. 10, 11. " It is written,—Every " Knee shall bow to me." And again in *Phil.* II. 10, 11. " At the Name of Jesus every Knee shall bow."

YEA, the *inspired Writers* of the *New-Testament* seem constantly to consider the *God* and *King of Israel*, who in the beginning created the Heavens and the Earth, as the very same Being, who afterwards dwelt in Flesh, and was called *Jesus Christ*, from the Liberty they take to apply to *Jesus Christ*, in their Writings, what was so evidently spoken of the *God* and *King of Israel*, in the sacred Writings of the Old-Testament.—— To mention but two Instances more. In all the 150 *Psalms*, there are none, which seem

* The GOD that speaks in this Chapter, is—The God, *who created the Universe*, *ver.* 18.——The God, who was known by the Name of " the God of Israel," ver. 3. that is, the God who brought *Israel* out of *Egypt*, and led them through the Wilderness ——And the God who delivered the Jews out of the *Babylonish Captivity*, ver. 13.—And he affirms over and over, " I am the Lord, and there is " none else; there is none besides me, there is none beside " me."—— Of this very same God, we read Isai. XL. 3. applied to Christ. Matt. III. 3.—And Isai. LII. 7. applied to Christ, Rom. X. 15.—And Isai. XL. 10, 11. applied to Christ, Joh. X. 11.—And Isai. XLI. 4. & XLIV. 6. and XLVIII. 12. applied to Christ, Rev. I. 17. & XXII. 13.

more plainly to speak of the SUPREME GOD than the 97th and 102nd——And yet both these are considered in the New-Testament as speaking of *Christ*, and accordingly are applied to him.——The 97th *Psalm* begins with, "The Lord reigneth, let the Earth "rejoice:" and an *inspired Writer* considers it as a Representation of the glorious Reign of the *Messiah*. For says he, (*Heb.* I. 6.) "When he bringeth the "first begotten into the World, he saith, And let all "the Angels of God worship him:" referring to the 7th *Verse* of the 97th Psalm, "Worship him, all "ye Gods."——And in the 102d *Psalm*, speaking of the SUPREME GOD, the *Psalmist* says, (ver. 25, 26, 27.) "Of old hast thou laid the Foundation of the Earth, "and the Heavens are the Work of thy Hands. "They shall perish, but thou shalt endure: yea, all "of them shall wax old like a Garment, as a "Vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be "changed: but thou art the same, and thy Years "shall have no End." Which is expressly applied to *Jesus Christ* in *Heb.* I. 10, 11, 12.*

WHEREFORE, from what has been said, it is natural to observe,——

1. THAT the GOD and KING of Israel we read of in the *Old-Testament*, is the *very same Being* who afterwards became incarnate, and is called by the Name

* There are comparatively but few Passages in the Old Testament, in which we may be certain that it is God the Father, who speaks, or is spoken of. There are but few Passages which could not have been applied to Christ, with as much apparent Justice, as those already applied to him by the inspired Writers of the New Testament. If Christ was not the God and King of Israel, how can they be justified in what they have done? But if he was, the Consequence is plain.

Name of JESUS CHRIST in the *New Testament*. ‡ i. e. JESUS OF NAZARETH *was really* THE KING OF THE JEWS.——So certain as the Writers of the New-Testament were divinely inspired, so certainly may this be depended upon.——Therefore,

2. IT is beyond us to imagine any Evidences of the Divinity of Christ, which could possibly have been given, more clear and striking than those which have been already given.——In the Beginning he created the Heaven and the Earth, even all Things were created by him and for him. And he was the God of *Abraham*, the God of *Isaac*, and the God of *Jacob*; whom they worshipped, and to whom they built Altars. He appeared to *Moses* in the burning Bush as the supreme God, and spake the Language of

‡ "But what Difference is there then between God the "Father and God the Son?"—*I answer*, They are one God, the same in Substance, equal in Power and Glory. Joh X. 30. "I and my Father are one." Compared with Joh. XIV. 7, 8, 9, 10.—And yet when we are baptised "in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the "Holy Ghost," (Matt. XXVIII. 19.) and observe how in the Gospel-Dispensation the *Father* sustains the Dignity, and stands for the Rights of the Godhead, (Rom. III. 25.) the *Son* becomes incarnate and is set forth to be a Propitiation for Sin, and the *Holy Spirit* inlightens and sanctifies Sinners: I say, when we observe these Representations in the sacred Records, it becomes evident, that *Father*, *Son* and *Holy Ghost*, altho' they are but *one God*, (1 Joh. V. 7.) plainly act as tho' they were *three distinct Persons*.—And if our Reason cannot find out *how* they are *three*, and yet but *one*: and if God has not thought it needful to instruct us in this Point: yet so far as is revealed, so far we may believe; and that with a Faith sufficiently distinct to lay a Foundation for Practice. The Believer may now, through the Mediation of the *Son*, have Access, by the Assistance of the *Spirit*, to the *Father*. Eph. II. 18.

of ſupreme Deity from Mount Sinai. In the Tabernacle and Temple he dwelt in the *Form of God*, and always ſpake as thinking it no Robbery to be *equal with God*. To *Iſaiah* he appeared as the Monarch of the Univerſe, and was worſhipped by the heavenly Hoſts as ſuch. And often he repeats it, "I am the "Lord, and there is none elſe, and beſide me there "is no God." And therefore *ſwears by himſelf*, there being no greater to ſwear by (*Heb.* VI. 13.) *that every Knee ſhall bow to him* ——Had he been truly and indeed by Nature SUPREME GOD, what could he have done, or what could he have ſaid, to have it made more manifeſt?

3. IF after all, he was not by *Nature God*, but a Being *infinitely inferior*; not the CREATOR, but a *Creature*; the Jewiſh Diſpenſation, which was profeſſedly deſigned to eſtabliſh the Worſhip of the ONE TRUE GOD, in Oppoſition to all others, was really calculated to eſtabliſh Idolatry (for aught I can ſee) and that forever. For he appeared in the Form of God, and was taken to be ſupreme God, and enacted it as the firſt and chief of all his Laws, that no God ſhould be worſhipped but Himſelf. So that to deny his Divinity, is to ſay, that the God of the Hebrews was an Impoſtor, and to declare *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, *Jacob*, *Moſes*, and all their *Prophets*, to be deluded Idolaters: for him they all believed to be ſupreme God, and him they worſhipped as ſuch.

4. BUT on the other Hand, granting the Old and New Teſtaments to be divinely inſpired, we may behold the manifold Wiſdom of God in laying out his grand Plan as he has done.——To God all his Works were known long before the Foundation of the World.——And among other Things, the Incarnation, and the Death of Chriſt as a propitiatory Sacrifice for Sin, were full in the divine View.——Now what Methods ſhould be taken to render

render Mankind, and the whole intellectual System, sensible of the infinite Dignity of him who died on the Cross?—— "Go," says the eternal FATHER to his SON, "Go, first create the World for which "thou art to die, and the whole System over which "thou art to reign, that how deep soever thine Abase- "ment may be, thine eternal Power and God-head "may be to be clearly seen by the Things thou hast "made.—Go, appear to *Abraham*, *Isaac* and *Jacob* in "the Form of God, and speak to *Moses*, and on "Mount Sinai, as plainly thinking it to be no Rob- "bery to be equal with God, and dwell in their Ta- "bernacle and Temple, and reign as God and King "among them; that when in the Fulness of Time "thou shalt appear in the Form of a Servant and in "the Likeness of a Man, and bleed and die on the "Cross, thy true Character may still be known. "That when I come to perform this greatest of all "my Works, to give my only begotten Son to die "for the World, it may be understood by frail Mor- "tals, what it is I have done." *

GOD

* That the SON was employed by the FATHER as his Agent to create the Universe, seems to be implied in that Manner of speaking in Eph. III. 9. "Who created all Things by "Jesus Christ," and in Heb. I. 2. "By whom he made "the Worlds."——And that his creating the World manifests him to be possessed of ETERNAL POWER and GOD-HEAD, is plain from Rom. I. 20.——And that the Work of Creation, and his other Works recorded in the Old-Testament, were designed to ascertain his true Character, as being by Nature GOD, in the View of frail Mortals, notwithstanding the Greatness of his intended Abasement, is evident from the inspired Writings of the New-Testament; as they abundantly improve them to this Purpose.——Other Kinds of Beings God has employ- ed in his Dealings with a fallen World, viz. *Angels* and Men.

God foresaw, his appearing in the Form of a Servant, and in the Likeness of Men, would, unless there was some Method taken to hinder it, induce Mankind to think him but a mere Man; and so prevent their seeing into the sublime Nature and Glory of the Christian Dispensation. In his infinite Wisdom, therefore, he appointed him such Works to do, previous to his Incarnation, as might effectually determine his true Character.——At first, his Disciples themselves hardly believed him to be supreme God, or that he was to die, to make Atonement for the Sins of the World: for their Eyes were not yet opened to understand the Scriptures of the Old-Testament, in which, both these Points were set in the strongest Light. The very Night before He suffered, it is plain, his Disciples had but a feeble Sense of his supreme

Men. And proper Care has always been taken to ascertain their true Character, as *mere Creatures*, in the sacred Writings. So *Moses* appears but a *mere Man*, whatever high Titles he had sometimes given him. And the *Angel* employed by Christ, to communicate to St. *John* the wonderful and glorious Visions and Revelations he had in the Isle of *Patmos*, appears to be but a *mere Creature*, (Rev. XXII. 9.) and he made Conscience of informing St. *John* in his true Character. But Christ appears in the Form of God, and speaks and acts as thinking himself supreme God, thro' a long Period of three or four Thousand Years. And granting him to be really such, there could not have been a better Method to determine his true Character to our View, and prevent our entertaining too low Thoughts o him, on Account of his appearing in the Form of a Servant and in the Likeness of a Man. If now we cannot giv Credit to his Words, when he says, "I and my Fathe "are one": yet surely we may to his Works, while w view him as the Creator of the Universe, and as the Gc and King of the Jews.

ſupreme God-Head. He had before ſaid, that "he "and his Father were one:" (*Joh.* X. 30.) but they did not fully underſtand him. He now ſays, "If "ye had known me, ye ſhould have known my "Father alſo; and from henceforth ye know him "and have ſeen him." (*Joh.* XIV. 7.) But they hardly knew what he meant. Therefore *Philip*, being one of them, ſays, "Lord, ſhew us the FA-"THER, and it ſufficeth us. (ver. 8.) Jeſus ſaith "unto him, Have I been ſo long with you, and yet "haſt thou not known me, Philip? He that hath "ſeen me, hath ſeen the Father: and how ſayeſt "thou, ſhew us the Father? (ver. 10.) Believeſt "thou not, that I am in the Father, and the Father "in me." But when afterwards their Eyes were opened to underſtand the Scriptures of the Old-Teſtament, and in all thoſe ſacred Pages to behold him in the Form of God, ſpeaking and acting as ſupreme Deity, now their Faith was fully confirmed. Indeed in the Days of his Abaſement, while his Divinity was ſo much concealed, his divine Glory at Times ſhone into their Hearts, and they "beheld "his Glory, [for Inſtance on the Mount, *Mat.* XVII.] "as the Glory of the only begotten Son of God." (*Joh.* I. 14.) And ſometimes under a divine Influence they cried out, "Thou art the Son of the "living God." (*Mat* XVI. 16.) But in general their Senſe of his Divinity was but feeble; ſo that after his Death they even doubted his being the true *Meſſiah*. (*Mar.* XVI. 14.) They knew not what to make of Things. (*Luk.* XXIV.) But after the Days of *Pentecoſt*, when the holy Spirit, who inſpired the Writings of the Old-Teſtament, was ſo plentifully poured out upon them, they never appear to doubt again; but as in their Writings, ſo no doubt in their Preachings, they take the utmoſt Liberty to apply Paſſages in the Old-Teſtament, evidently

spoken of the supreme God, the Creator of the Universe, the King of Israel, to Jesus Christ; and without Scruple call him, "Immanuel, God, the "true God, God manifest in the Flesh, *yea*, God "over all blessed for ever." †

It is written in *Isai.* IX. 6. *His Name shall be called* WONDERFUL. And indeed, of all Things that ever happened in the whole intelligent System, this is the most astonishing, that the ETERNAL GOD who created the Universe should become incarnate and die on the Cross. That the *Babe* in the Manger was "the mighty God, the everlasting Father, "the Creator of the Ends of the Earth!"—He looked like another Child; He grew in Stature like another Child; and when grown, he appeared in Fashion as a Man: his ancient Glory all laid aside: to Appearance, a Man of Sorrow, despised, condemned, hated, ridiculed, the laughing-stock of many in Town and Country, and those the most rich and honourable: at last, crucified as a Malefactor. And was this the ETERNAL JEHOVAH!—THE GOD OF THE WHOLE UNIVERSE!—this mean Man!—this crucified Criminal!—Well might his Name be called WONDERFUL.——O the manifold Wisdom of God, in

† And if his Disciples had so little Sense of his true Character, as supreme God, is it in the least credible, that the Man spoken of in *Mat.* XIX. 16. who called him *good Master*, had so much as one Thought of his supreme God head? far from it, no doubt. It does not appear that he thought him to be the Messiah. But our Saviour knew what he himself was, and pitied the Man, and said, "Why callest thou me good? there is none good, but "one God." As if he had said, "You call me *God*: "Do you know who I be, or what you say? there "is none Good, but God; do you think I am God?" Words well contrived to put him on a farther Enquiry into our Saviour's true Character.

in appointing his SON, previous to his Incarnation, to appear in the Form of God, and speak and act as thinking it no Robbery to be SUPREME GOD, thro' a Period of three or four Thousand Years, as preparatory and introductory to this astonishing Abasement; that there might be sufficient external Evidence, with Certainty, to determine his true Character, when appearing in Circumstances so infinitely below his real Dignity!——But it is Time to proceed, as was proposed,

II. To take a View of our blessed Saviour "in "the Form of a Servant, in the Likeness of Men."

As MAN, He had an *human Body*, which, from the Smallness of an Infant, grew up into the Stature of a Man.—And an *human Soul*, in all Respects like ours, Sin only excepted. (*Heb.* II. 16, 17.)—As *Man*, God was his Father; even as he is the Father of the whole Creation in general, and as he is the Father of all good Men in particular: and in a still more eminent Sense. And God was his God. As he said, "I ascend to my Father, and your Father, to "my God and your God." (*Joh.* XX. 17.) As *Man*, he was dependent on God, and prayed to him, and praised him. As *Man*, he had no Ability to work Miracles: but, *the Father*, saith he, "that "dwelleth in me, he doth the Works." (*Joh.* XX. 10.)——As *Man*, he loved the young Man in the Gospel for his humane Disposition and respectful Behaviour:—He groaned at his Friend *Lazarus*'s Grave—He wept over *Jerusalem*—and was in an Agony and prayed in the Garden—and cried on the Cross, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken "me!"——

As *Man*, He grew in Knowledge and Wisdom, and in Favour with God and Man (*Luk.* II. 52.) and yet was at an infinite Remove from *absolute Omniscience*: yea, he did not so much as know when the

Day of Judgment would be. (*Mar.* XIII. 32.) The DEITY, who was the FATHER * of the Man Christ Jesus,

* By the FATHER is sometimes meant the *first Person* in the Trinity, as in *Mat.* XXVIII. 19. 1 *Joh.* V. 7.—But at other Times, is plainly meant the DEITY, without Reference to any Distinction of Persons, as in *Joh.* IV. 23, 24. 1 *Joh.* II. 15, &c.

OBJEC. "BUT if Jesus Christ was God and Man, in one Person, how could that one Person say, that he knew not the Day of Judgment? for if he did not know, as Man, yet he did, as he was God."

ANSW. IT was usual for our Saviour to speak after this Manner. *Joh.* X. 15. "I lay down my Life for the Sheep." Now how could that one Person say, "I lay down my Life"? Was the divine Nature to die? and yet was not *that Nature*, Himself? Certainly it was. For he adds, ver. 18. "I have Power to lay it down, and I have Power to take it again." Certainly the human Nature had not Power to raise it self from the Dead.—So *Joh.* VIII. 58. "Before Abraham was, I am." But how could that be true? for, as Man, he was short of 50 Years old.——So again, *Joh.* III. 13. "Even the Son of Man, which is in Heaven." Certainly the human Nature of Christ was not *then*, nor ever had been in Heaven. And if, consistent with Truth, he might say, that the *Son of Man is in Heaven*, altho' the human Nature never was there; he might as well say, the *Son knoweth not*, altho' the divine Nature did know.—The Manner of speaking, when honestly attended to, instead of tending to mislead us, tends to set the very Truth in a striking Light, viz. that he was *very God*, and *very Man*.——And agreable hereto we may observe, that the *same Person* that says, *not the Son, but the Father only*, in *Mar.* XIII. 32. says also, *I and my Father are one*. Joh. X. 30. And, *he that hath seen me, hath seen the Father*. Joh. XIV. 9. *The Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the Works*. (ver. 10.) N. B. In this last Text, he, distinguishing between his human

Jesus, how intimately soever united to him, had never imparted to him the Knowledge of this Thing. The Union was such, as that he might justly be named IMMANUEL (*Mat.* I. 23.) yet the *Natures* remained *distinct*. And the *human Nature* was not conscious to the Ideas of the *divine*, only as they were imparted. This was the Case when he dwelt on Earth, notwithstanding his personal Union to the second Person in the Trinity; and it is still the Case now he is in Heaven, notwithstanding his Exaltation and Glory; He knows not the Secrets of the Divinity any farther then they are communicated to him. Therefore we have that Expression in *Rev.* I. 1. "The Revelation of "Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him." And doubtless, it is simply impossible, that any Creature should be conscious to the Ideas of the DIVINITY, as a Man is conscious to the Thoughts of his own Heart, by *immediate Intuition*.——But he was not only a *Man*, but *also took on him*——

THE *Form of a Servant*.——And as such, He received all his Power and Authority from his *Father*, as he constantly declares, and all his Instructions. For he came not *of himself*, nor to do *his own Will*, nor to seek *his own Glory*; but his *Father* sent him; and he spake and acted altogether as *his Servant*. And as such, "his Father was greater than he"

human and divine Natures, calls his divine Nature *the Father*. Therefore, when he says (*Mar.* XIII. 32.) *Not the Son, but the Father only*, the Sense is plain.——Nor is it any Objection against this, that Christ speaks of the Father as distinct from himself in both these Instances. For in the same Discourse (*Mar.* XIII. 19.) he speaks of *God the Creator* as one distinct from himself. Yet himself was the *God that created* all Things. However, himself was a Creature too. See also *Joh.* VI. 42.

Mat. XXVIII. 18. *Joh.* VII. 16, 17, 18. & XII. 49, 50. and XIV. 28. †

And a principal Command he had received of his *Father*, was to "lay down his Life for his Sheep." (*Joh.* X. 15--18.) And such was his Regard to his *Father*'s Honour, and to the Salvation of Sinners, that he was obedient, even to the Death of the Cross. Wherefore his *Father* loved him, and in Testimony of his Love, highly exalted him, and, as Mediator, set him at the Head of the Universe, and made him Heir of all Things, (for, as *God*, he was, by *an underived Right*, Lord of all Things before, *Isai.* VI. 1.) and gave him a Name above every Name, that to the Name of Jesus every Knee should bow, and every

† All the Power and Authority, by which the *Mediator* acts, in the whole of his Mediatoral Work is derived, from the *Father*. He acts wholly as his Father's Vice-gerent, and by his Commission. "He can do nothing of himself." Joh. V. 19. He gives Gifts to his Church, (Eph. IV. 8. Psal. LXVIII. 18.) Sends the Holy Spirit, (Joh. XIV. 16, 26. XV. 26.) Subdues all Enemies (Rev. XIX. 11—21. 1 Cor. XV. 27.) raises the Dead, (Joh. V. 21, 25, 26.) and judges the World, (Ver. 27.) wholly by this derived Authority. And "it hath pleased the Father, that all "Fulness should dwell in him." Col. I. 19.——And these Texts here referred to, instead of proving, that he is not by Nature God, (as the *Arians* suppose) do only prove, that, he, who was in the Form of God, and thought it not Robbery to be equal with God, really "took on him "the Form of a Servant."—All mere Creatures are (like those born in a State of Servitude) God's Servants from their very first Existence. But he originally was not God's Servant. He was at his own Disposal, and became a Servant by a voluntary Act. "He *took* on him the "Form of a Servant." It is no Condescension for the most exalted Angel in Heaven to be God's Servant; but it was infinite Condescension for the Son of God to become a Servant to his Father.

every Tongue confeſs, that Jeſus is Lord, *to the Glory of God the Father*:——Nothing being more to the Glory of God the *Father*, than ſo highly to exalt a Servant, who had ſhewn ſo great Regard to his Honour, and to the Honour of his Law and Government and ſacred Authority;—And nothing being more to the Glory of God the Father, than that the whole Univerſe ſhould bow to the Name of his great Vice-gerent, exalted to ſit at his own right Hand, as a Reward of his Fidelity to his *Father*, while acting in the *Form of a Servant*. ‖

AMONG all the Servants of God, none ever did ſo much to the Glory of God, nor ever ſhewed ſuch a Love to Righteouſneſs and Hatred of Iniquity, as he, and none ever received ſo great a Reward. He was "anointed with Oil of Gladneſs above his Fellows" (*Heb.* I. 9.) Above all his Fellow-ſervants, whether Angels or Men, and however faithful to him that appointed them: none ever were, or ever will be exalted to ſo great Glory.

FOR He ſits at the *Head of the Univerſe*, even at "the Father's right Hand, far above all Principality, "and Power, and Might, and Dominion." (*Eph.* I. 20, 21.) And here, as his *Father*'s Vice-gerent, *God-Man-*

‖ NONE will think, that it would be to the Honour of the ſupreme God, to give too high a Seat and too much Honour to any of his Servants. But methinks this was too much Honour to be paid to a mere Creature: for it is the *very Honour*, which the ſupreme God "ſwears ſhall "be paid to himſelf." (Iſa. XLV. 23.) And it is a Maxim with the ſupreme God, "Not to give his Glory to "another." (Iſa. XLII. 8. and XLVIII. 11.) But that Saying of our bleſſed Saviour in Joh. X. 30. removes the Difficulty at once. "I and my Father are one." So now we may "honour the Son even as we honour the "Father." (Joh. V. 23.) And it is as God would have it. It is to "the Glory of God the Father."

Man-Mediator-King, He is to reign till all his Enemies are put under his Feet, till the final Judgment is over, and all the Affairs of an apoſtate World are ſettled. And then he will, in Teſtimony that he has acted all as his Father's Servant, reſign this delegated Authority. And *God ſhall be all in all.*—— As his *Father's Servant*, He received this Authority, to deſtroy the Works of the Devil, to bring Good out of all the Evil Sin had introduced, and put an End to all the Diſorder and Confuſion in the intellectual Syſtem, conſequent on the Apoſtaſy of Angels and Men: and having finiſhed his Work, he reſigns the Kingdom to the *Father*, the firſt Perſon in the ever-bleſſed Trinity, to whom, as ſuch, the Government of the World properly belongs, and He ſhall take the Kingdom, and reign over the Univerſe for ever and ever. And Jeſus Chriſt himſelf, as Mediator, ſhall be ſubject to him, as is ſuitable, that the *God head* only may be exalted, and as it really is, ſo it may appear to be, *all in all.*— For while the *Father* reigns, the whole *God-head* reigns in him. So that, while the Son, as Mediator, reſigns the Kingdom to him; yet, as God, He reigns in Him, and forever will. But his mediatorial Government he reſigns, (even that delegated Authority, whereby, as his *Father's Servant*, he had ruled the *Univerſe*, in the Capacity of *God-Man-Mediator-King*;) having finiſhed the Work which he was impowered and authorized to do. *

As

* Object. 'But it is written, that Chriſt "ſhall reign "over the Houſe of Jacob for ever." Luk. I. 33. "His "Kingdom is an everlaſting Kingdom." Dan. VII 27. 'His "Throne is for ever and ever." Heb. I. 8. And "he ſhall reign for ever and ever." Rev. XI. 15.'

Anſwer. Christ, at preſent, as Mediator, reigns over the *whole Univerſe*. All Beings, the Father only excepted, are

As *God-Man-Mediator*, in two distinct Natures, yet but one Person, He was his *Father's Servant.*——As such, he became obedient unto the Death: Therefore the Church is said to be redeemed *with the Blood of God.* (*Act* XX. 28.) And *God* is said to have *laid down his Life for us.* 1 *Joh.* III. 16.—And, as such, he ascended to Heaven and led Captivity captive; and therefore St. *Paul* applies what is spoken of God in *Psal.* LXVIII. 18. to Him, in *Eph.* IV. 8.—And, as such, He was exalted to the highest Glory in Heaven, and every Knee ordered to bow to him; and so what is spoken of God in *Isai.* XLV. 23. is applied to him, in *Phil.* II. 10.——For He was GOD as well as MAN, God-Man, one Person; and as God's Servant, in the great Work of Redemption, he was obedient unto Death, and as God's Servant was rewarded with this high Exaltation ——

THUS stands the Character of Jesus Christ in the sacred Writings of the *Old* and *New-Testaments*: all which cannot be better summed up than in the Words

are under his Authority. 1 Cor. XV. 27. But when he has finished the Work, for which he is invested with this *universal Authority*, he will resign this *universal Commission*, and the Father take the Government of the *Universe*. However, he will, as Mediator, still "reign over the "House of Jacob [his redeemed ones] for ever." It is needful now, that Angels should be under him, to be his ministring Spirits; and that he should have full Authority over Earth and Hell, for the Good and Safety of his Church: But then the Mediator will need the Angels no longer for ministring Spirits, to minister to the Heirs of Salvation, who will be all safe in Heaven. Nor will he have any Thing more to do with wicked Men and Devils. As for the Wicked, their Day of Grace will be over; and neither they, nor the Devils can do any more Mischief. Having shut them up in Hell, he will give up the Keys to his Father.

Words of the *Apostle*, who seems to have had all these Things in his View.—— "Who being in the Form "of God, thought it not Robbery to be equal with "God: but made himself of no Reputation, and "took upon him the Form of a Servant, and was "made in the Likeness of Men: and being found "in Fashion as a Man, he humbled himself, and "became obedient unto Death, even the Death of "the Cross. Wherefore God hath also highly ex-"alted him, and given him a Name which is above "every Name: that at the Name of Jesus every "Knee should bow, of Things in Heaven, & Things "in Earth, and Things under the Earth; and that "every Tongue should confess, that Jesus Christ is "Lord, to the Glory of God the Father;" in whose Name he administers his mediatorial Kingdom, and to whose Honour he professedly refers it.

And thus we have, as was proposed, taken a View of Jesus Christ; *first*, as being in *the Form of God*, and speaking and acting as thinking it no Robbery to be *equal with God*: and then, as having taken upon him the *Form of a Servant*, appearing in the *Likeness of Men*. And have seen the Method infinite Wisdom took to ascertain his true Character, that the Greatness of his Abasement might not mislead frail Mortals, nor raise one suspicious Thought of the infinite Dignity of his Person, as our GREAT IMMANUEL.——And now therefore,

1. What an infinite Condescension was it in the eternal God, the Creator of the Universe, who had appeared in the Form of God, and spake and acted as thinking it no Robbery to be equal with God, thro' a long Period of three or four Thousand Years, to lay aside all his Glory, and from being worshipped as supreme God, to become of no Reputation, and even take upon him the Form of a Servant and the Likeness of Men! Well might St.

Paul

Paul urge this Example, as a powerful Inducement, on all the Disciples of Christ, to be full of Love and Condescension towards one another. *Phil.* II. 1—5.*

But,

2. How ingrateful, yea how impious would it be in us, to take Occasion from his appearing in the Form of a Servant, and in the Likeness of Men, *which was for our Sakes*, to take Occasion (I say) from this, to call his DIVINITY into Question.—Especially, now since we are so plainly informed, by the Holy Ghost, who inspired the Writers of the New-Testament, that he is the very same God who in the Beginning created the Heavens and the Earth, and appeared to *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob*, to *Moses* and *Isaiah*, and who was believed to be *the supreme God*, and worshipped as such by all the *Patriarchs* and *Prophets*:—Only because he has laid aside his God-like Form, and taken the Form of a Servant; and instead of speaking like a GOD from Mount Sinai, appears and speaks like a Man;——That we should immediately doubt his Divinity, and look upon him as a mere Man, when yet all this Abasement was for our Sakes!——How must HE look upon it!—How must HE resent it!

JUST

* BUT how does his Argument lose all its Force, as the *Arians* interpret and understand the Apostle's Words!—— "Who being in the Form of God, by being his Minister "and Representative, did not proudly and vainly assume "to be equal with God," &c. (thus *Chubb*) For what Condescension was it, for a *mere Creature*, as they say he was, not to aspire after supreme God head? Can a mere Creature be looked upon as very condescending, because he is not as proud as Satan himself? And can we suppose the inspired Apostle would argue thus, Ver. 8. "Let this "Mind be in you, which was also in Jesus Christ,"—'who "being but a mere Creature, was so very condescending, "as not to pretend to be equal with God.'——And yet this must be his Argument, as they interpret his Words.

JUST thus did the *wicked Jews* (yet we are more to blame than they; because we have more Light, and better Advantages to form a right Judgment of his true Character) I say, just thus did the *wicked Jews*, when they charged Him with Blasphemy, for saying, "I and my Father are one." "Thou" (say they) "being a Man, makest thy self God." Here was his *Crime*, and here was their *Proof*. (Joh. X. 33.) —He had, upon a like Occasion, some time ago, referred them to the Scriptures of the Old-Testament in general, to decide his true Character; (Joh. V. 18, 39.) but to little Purpose.—He now therefore only refers them to a particular Passage in the LXXXIId Psalm, the 6th Verse, saying, "Is it not written in "your Law, I said, Ye are Gods? And if he called "them Gods," &c. i. e. "If the Types, which "were Shadows, were called Gods; the Antitype, "which is the Substance, must be real God. If "they had the *Name*, He must have the *Thing*. *For "the Scripture cannot*, in any Particular, *be broken*. Not "only all the Prophecies, but also all the Types of "the Messiah must be verified in him. You have "no Reason therefore to charge the Messiah with "Blasphemy, for claiming to be the Son of God.* And

* It is worthy our Attention, that, in the sacred Writings of the Old-Testament, the chief Rulers in Israel are called *Gods*, (*Exod.* XXVIII. 28.) and *Children of the* MOST HIGH. (*Psal.* LXXXII. 6.) Which doubtless was, because they were designed to be *Types* of *Christ*, who was by *Nature God*, and the very *Son of God*.

FOR, as has been before observed, God himself was the King of the Jews. As it is written, "The Lord your God "was your King." 1 *Sam.* XII. 12. And this God was Jesus Christ, as has been before proved.—Then he appeared in the *Form of God*.—And that there might be a *Shadow* of the State he was afterwards to be in, when in the

" And indeed notwithstanding the Meanness of my
" Appearance in your Eyes, while you behold me
D " in

the *Form of a Servant*, acting as his Father's Delegate, he constituted the Jewish Rulers to be his Delegates then. He *anointed* and authorized them (1 *Sam.* X. 1. & XVI. 12, 13.) as he was to be *anointed* by his Father, and *sanctified* and *sent* into the World, and to receive all his Authority from him.——They were called the *Lord's Anointed*, the *Lord's Messiah*, (as it is in the Original) as that was the Name by which he was to be known. He was to be called the *Christ*, i. e. the *Anointed*, the *Messiah*; for all are the same Name, and mean the same Thing. *Joh.* I. 41.—— And they were directed from Time to Time by the *Word of the Lord*, which *came to them* when they went to enquire of the Lord. (1 *Sam.* XIV. 18, 19. and XXVIII. 6. and XXX. 7, 8. 2 *Sam.* II. 1.) And as *Gods* they sat *upon the Throne of the Lord*, and reigned over the *Kingdom of the Lord*. (1 *Chron.* XXIX. 23. 2 *Chron.* XIII. 8.)——In all which, they were *Types* of the *Messiah*, who in the Fulness of Time was to become incarnate, to be *anointed*, *sanctified*, and *sent* into the World, to act in all Things according to his Father's Commandment, as his Father's Delegate, and as such to be exalted to *sit on his Throne in Heaven*, at the Head of the Creation, to govern the Church and the World. —And these *Types* were named *Gods*, and called *the Children of the most High*; as the great Antitype was the *Son of God*, and *one with his Father*.—They were *Shadows*; he is the *Substance*. They were called *Gods*; he is really *God*.——So that this is the Force of our Saviour's Argument; " What the Types were in Name and
" Shadow, that the Antitype must be in Reality and Sub-
" stance; for *the Scriptures cannot be broken*: But these
" Types were *Gods* in Name and Shadow: Therefore
" the Messiah, who is the Antitype, must be *God* in Reality
" and Substance."——Thus in the Jewish Sacrifices there was a *Shadow* of *Substitution*, and they were *called Atonements*;

" in the Likeneſs of Men, yet my Works, which " you alſo ſee, evidence my Divinity. If you cannot " give

Atonements; ſo in Jeſus Chriſt there was a *real Subſtitution*, and a *real Atonement*. (See my Sermon on *Gal.* 3. 24.) And indeed, the Meſſiah muſt be in *Reality* all that which the Types were in *Name* and *Shew*, otherwiſe the Scripture would not be accompliſhed and verified.

If any therefore ſhould ſay, " that as the Jewiſh Kings " were Gods by Office, ſo Chriſt was only a God by " Office; as they only had the Shadow of Divinity, ſo " He only has the Shadow of Divinity:"—I anſwer, Then *the Scripture is broken*: The Types are not accompliſhed in the Antitype. It is all a *Shadow* ſtill. The *Subſtance* is not come. And the *prophetic Prayer*, with which the LXXXIId Pſalm concludes, is never to be anſwered. " Ariſe, O God, judge the Earth: for thou " ſhalt inherit all Nations." For it is not a GOD, but a *mere Creature*, that is to have " the Heathen for his " Inheritance, and the utmoſt Parts of the Earth for his " Poſſeſſion." *Pſal.* II. 8.——And if his Divinity is but a *Shadow*, ſo is his Atonement. The true Atonement is not come. The Types are not fulfilled. *The Scripture is broken.* And we are yet in our Sins. For the Blood of one mere Creature can no more make a real Atonement than the Blood of another mere Creature. The Blood of a *Bull* or a *Goat*, and the Blood of a *mere Man*, are equally at an infinite Remove from any Virtue to make a proper Atonement for Sin. All that has been done is a *mere Shadow*. There is no *Subſtance* in it. And ſo *the Scripture is broken*: and the Truth of divine Revelation, in general, overthrown. For if any one Thing, held forth in a Type or a Prophecy, ſhould fail of Accompliſhment, the Truth of that whole Revelation, in which that Type or Prophecy is contained, would be overthrown. ——So that granting the Old-Teſtament to be divinely inſpired, our Saviour's Argument amounts to a ſtrict Demonſtration.

THE

" give Credit to my Words, yet surely you may to the " Works wrought by me; which evidently are " not the Works of a mere Man. And they are " a sufficient Proof that the Father is in me, and I " in him, i. e. that *I and my Father are one.*" (*Joh.* X. 34—38.) So spake the incarnate God, who of old dwelt in their Tabernacle, from whence *the Word of God* used *to come* forth to their chief Rulers, when they came to *enquire of the Lord.* Then He was their GOD, and KING, and ORACLE. Now all his Glory is laid aside. He is of no Reputation. Nor can any Thing he says, nor all the mighty Works he had wrought, asswage their Anger, or keep their Hands from Violence. He is obliged to leave the Temple,

THE Sense the *Arians* give to the Words, is this. " I and " my Father are one, i. e. engaged in the same Design. " And when the Jews thro' Mistake thought he meant, " that he was *one with God*: He answers, *I do not* " *mean, I am God by Nature, but only God by Office.*" —Query I. What was this Answer to the Purpose?— Query II. Why did not he expressly tell them, that he only meant he was engaged in the same Design with his Father, as all other good Men are? This would have cleared him from the odious Character of a Blasphemer, and prevented their taking up Stones again to stone him. And if indeed he was but a Man, all must own, it was his Duty to have spoken out, in as plain a Manner as *Paul* and *Barnabas* did, when the People of *Lystra* took them for Gods, and were about to offer Sacrifice to them. (*Act.* XIV. 15.) But to suffer himself to pass for a Blasphemer now, and soon after to be pronounced worthy of Death for Blasphemy; and yet never clear up the Matter; but leave his Disciples after him, to follow his Example, and call him " God, the true God, God blessed for " ever, by whom and for whom all Things were created," when he was as really a mere Creature as you and I, is what can never be accounted for.

where he was, and be gone.——However, the Matter did not end here. For when they arraigned Him before the High-Priest, they renew the Charge of Blasphemy, and pronounce him worthy of Death. (*Mat.* XXVI. 63—66.) Nor did *Pilate* know how to express the Crime, for which he was put to Death, better than in this Title put on the Cross, JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS. So that his claiming to be the SON OF GOD and KING OF THE JEWS, cost him his LIFE.

AND shall we crucify Him afresh, and put him to open Shame, and justify all the Conduct of the Jews towards him, by saying, He was indeed but a Man!—For if so, it was Blasphemy indeed to pretend to be supreme God. And we know, the Blasphemer deserved to die, according to the Law of *Moses*.

AND what is there to tempt us to this impious and ingrateful Deed? Not any Thing our blessed Saviour ever said, or ever did: for he always spake and acted in Character.—As GOD, when in the Form of God—As MAN, when in the Likeness of Men—As a *Servant*, when in the Form of a Servant—As our exalted *Mediator*, now at the right Hand of the *Father*; from whom, He, as Mediator, has received all his Power: and to whom, when he has finished his Work, he will, as Mediator, resign his delegated Authority. Nor can any Thing he ever said, or any Thing he ever did, fairly construed, once tempt us to doubt his being by Nature supreme God, after such clear Evidences of his Divinity have been given us. Nor can I think what should induce us to doubt his Divinity,—unless we secretly imagine, there was no Need, that the Creator of the Universe should become incarnate and die on the Cross for us: We were not so bad, nor was Sin so great an Evil, as to make such an Atonement needful.——

ful.——And if this be at the Bottom, let us honestly say so, that the World may know the true Ground of our Infidelity, and see it all summed up in a few Words, "The whole need not a Physician, but "they that are sick."

THIS was the very Case with the unbelieving Jews, and the chief Reason of their rejecting Christianity. They had an high Opinion of their own Goodness; nor could they conceive why they might not be accepted with God on the Foot of their own Righteousness. And therefore the Gospel-Way of Salvation, thro' the Mediation and Death of the Son of God, appeared needless in their View, and was therefore absolutely incredible in their Sight. This they *stumbled at*, as the great *stumbling-Stone*, as St. *Paul* tells us, who was intimately acquainted with the whole Affair. (*Rom.* IX. 30—33.) It did bear too hard upon their moral Character, as it supposed them so infinitely odious and Hell-deserving in the Sight of God, that nothing short of the Interposition of his own Son, as an Expiatory Sacrifice, could open a Door for him, in Justice and Honour, to pardon and save them.——But how exceeding unreasonable was this their Conduct, as their own Law so plainly held forth the infinite Evil of Sin, in threatning eternal Damnation for the least Transgression? (*Gal.* III. 10.) Which might easily have led them to a Sense of their Need of an Atonement, of infinite Value, had their Hearts honestly lain open to Conviction.

AND is it not worthy our Observation, that those among professed Christians, who have denied the Divinity of Christ, have been wont generally also to deny—our natural Depravity—the infinite Evil of Sin—the Eternity of Hell-Torments—the Necessity of any proper Satisfaction for Sin—the Doctrine of Justification by Faith alone?—And perhaps, to be a

little more consistent with themselves, they ought to deny the Inspiration of the *Old* and *New-Testaments*, in which the Divinity of Christ, and these other Doctrines, are set in so strong a Light.—— And indeed *Deism* has been for some Time growing to be the most fashionable Scheme among the polite and genteel Part of the Nation.——And loose Principles and loose Practices are preparing us apace for all those heavy Judgments, which seem to be coming on our Nation and Land. ‡ (*Judg.* II. 11—15. *Jer.* XVIII. 9, 10.)

3. If Jesus Christ be in very Deed the God that created the Universe, we may be assured, He is in every Respect fit and sufficient for the whole Work he undertook; nor will he, nor can he, fail to accomplish the whole Design he had in view. He was originally unobliged to do a Creature's Duty, being by Nature God; and so at Liberty to undertake, and had where-with-all to pay our Debt, infinite as it was: whereas, the whole Creation had not a Farthing to spare for us, owing all they had done, or could do, to God, on their own Account.—It was honourable to God, to appoint such a Surety for us; he was one, God might honorably trust and deal with, as he was equal with God, and Fellow to the *Lord of Hosts*. (*Zech.* XIII. 7.)—He was worthy the Regard of the infinite Majesty, able to secure the Honour of his Law, establish his Authority, and answer all the Ends of Government. He was fit to be admitted, as Mediator, into his Presence-Chamber; to be exalted to

‡ Salmon, speaking of the present State of Religion in *England*, says, "Vice and Profaneness reign triumphant; "the sacred Truths of Christianity are questioned and "disputed; and a Man that is not an Infidel, is scarce "allowed to have common Sense, among those that "look upon themselves to be the polite World."

Salmon's *Geog. & Hist. Gram.* Pag. 245.

to sit at his right Hand,—a very unmeet Place for a mere Creature; and to be worshipped by all the heavenly Hosts, in his Father's Presence; the very Thought of which, I am persuaded, no mere Creature in that World could possibly endure, but rather with the *Angel* in *Rev.* XXII. 9. would say, *See thou do it not*; for I am but a mere Creature; *worship God.* (*Luk.* IV. 18.)——And fit to sit at the Head of the Universe, to be made Head over all Things, to govern the World and the Church; a Place too high for a mere Creature, a Trust too great to be reposed in one by Nature mutable, fallible, short-sighted; and meet only for Immutability, Infallibility, and Omniscience.——And fit finally to judge the World, and as the great Arbitrator between God and his rebellious Creatures, to see Right done, and cause Justice to take Place: an Honour too great for a mere Creature, and a Work too difficult for any but the Omniscient, who "only knows the Hearts of all "the Children of Men."—But IMMANUEL is fit for all this, worthy the Honour, and qualified for the Work; and may be thus employed, thus exalted, thus worshipped,—not inconsistent with, but *to the Glory* of God the Father.——Nor can we doubt but that he is able to save to the uttermost all that come to God by him, nor fear but that he will accomplish all his Designs of Grace. "How beau-"tiful upon the Mountains are the Feet of him "that bringeth good Tidings, &c. that saith unto "Zion, THY GOD REIGNETH!" *Isai.* LII. 7. applied to Christ. *Rom.* X. 15.

4. BUT if indeed He was the GOD that created the Universe; Oh, how awful and solemn the Tho't! If indeed He was the GOD that created the Universe, who hung incarnate on the Cross, "set forth to be "a Propitiation for Sin, that God might be just!" What shall we say! What shall we think!

LET us look up, and behold him—surrounded by Thousands of Spectators, insulting—"If he be "the KING OF ISRAEL" [indeed he was, but they knew it not; for had they known it, they would not have crucified the LORD OF GLORY] If he "be the KING OF ISRAEL, they say, let him come "down from the Cross, and we will believe Him." —They insult;—He prays, "Father, forgivet hem, "they know not what they do." And with all his Divinity concealed, as one forsaken of Heaven, and cast out from the Earth, there he hangs, and bleeds, and dies!

FOR as our Rebellion, with all its Circumstances, had been public, as it were in the Presence of the whole intelligent System; so now the Satisfaction must be as publickly made.——Satan, God's Enemy, and our inveterate Foe, had seduced our first Parents, and in them virtually the whole human Race, to transgress the divine Law, and cast off the divine Authority, and join with him.—And here on Earth Satan had set up his Kingdom, in the Sight of Heaven, and in Defiance of the MOST HIGH.—And exulting in all his Mischief, he was ready impiously to say, "In Spite of God, and his Son, the "Day is my own. For if God pardons an apo- "state World, doomed to Death, then will it appear, "that he has no Regard to his Law, or to his "Threatning, or to impartial Justice; which, "when I was driven out of Heaven, he pretended, "was the Motive. Nor can it fail to be Matter "of eternal Triumph to us, to see the Honour of "his Law and Government and Authority given "up, to save his Creature, Man.——Or if he re- "signs the whole human Race to Destruction, as "he certainly will, if he deals by them as he did "by us, it will be Matter of eternal Consolation "and Joy, to see, we can ruin Worlds, as fast as

"he

" he can make them. That, let him take what " Courſe he will, we are ſure of an eternal Tri- " umph."——So ſtood the Caſe.——And all the Inhabitants of Heaven looked on, no doubt, to ſee the Event.

" THE Honour of the divine Government," ſaid the ETERNAL SON,* " muſt and ſhall be ſecured. The

* I call Him, the ETERNAL SON, becauſe he was not only " made of the Seed of David, according to the Fleſh ;" but alſo " declared to be the Son of God with Power, " according to the Spirit of Holineſs," i. e. as to his divine Nature, " by the Reſurrection from the Dead." Rom. I. 3, 4. Agreable to thoſe Words in Mic. V. 2. " Thou " Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the " Thouſands of Judah, yet out of Thee ſhall he COME " FORTH" (i. e. be born) " that is to be Ruler in Iſrael ; " whoſe GOINGS FORTH (the ſame Word in the Original, before tranſlated *come forth*) " have been of old, even " FROM EVERLASTING." i. e. As he was the Son of David according to the Fleſh, in Time ; ſo from *eternal Ages* he was the Son of God, as to his divine Nature. Therefore called, by Way of Eminence, God's *own Son*, and his *only begotten Son*. Joh. III. 16. Rom. VIII. 32.

Queſt. 1. How then is Chriſt " the firſt-born of every Creature "? or as it ought rather to be rendered, " the firſt-born of the whole Creation." Col. I. 15.——I anſwer, 1. Not as to his *human Nature ;* for that was born not two Thouſand Years ago. 2. Nor as to his *divine Nature ;* for that, inſtead of being the firſt-born of every Creature, was the Creator of the whole Univerſe. 3. But with Reſpect to *the Privileges of the Birth-Right*. (Pſal. LXXXIX. 27.) he being appointed " Heir of all Things." Heb. I. 2. In which *Iſaac* was a Type of him. See Gen. XXV. 5.——All Things were created by him and FOR him, originally ; and now, as Mediator, he is put into Poſſeſſion of all Things, as the great *Heir of the whole Univerſe*.

" The Law is holy, just and good; and must and " shall be magnified and made honourable. Sin is " as great an Evil as my Father's Law speaks it; " and must and shall be considered and treated as " such; and that in the Sight of the whole System. " For my Father's Authority must and shall be " publickly maintained.——And yet Satan may be " disappointed of his expected Triumph: For the " human Race need not be resigned to Ruin: for " lo, I am willing to become incarnate, and die in " their Room.—Behold, here I am! *Psal.* XL. 7.

" THOU art my beloved Son, in whom I am " well-pleased; thou lovest Righteousness and hatest " Iniquity, and art MY EXPRESS IMAGE;" said the *eternal Father*; " and even as thou hast said, " so shall it be. *The Seed of the Woman shall bruise* " *the Serpent's Head. Gen.* III. 15. Thy dying Love " shall defeat the Designs of his infernal Malice."

WHEREFORE see him now on the Cross, " set " forth to be a Propitiation for Sin, to declare the " Righteousness of God, that God might be just, " and yet justify the Sinner that believes in Jesus." *Rom.* III. 25, 26. And there he *spoils Principalities and Powers*, saps the Foundation of Satan's Kingdom, and even *triumphs over him on the Cross. Col.* II. 15. And all in Sight, as it were, of the whole intelligent Creation. 1 *Pet.* I. 12. And suited to give universal Instruction. *Eph.* III. 10.

LOOK

Universe. And having thus the *Birth-Right*, he is with Propriety called, *the first-born of the whole Creation.*

Quest. 2. How is Christ the " Beginning of the Creation " of God" ? Rev. III. 14.——I answer, The Word in the Original signifies, *The Beginning, the Chief, Principality, Dominion.* And the Meaning is, that Christ, as Mediator, is the *Head* and *Ruler* of the Universe, and the great CHIEF *of the Creation of God.* Eph. I. 21.

Look up, and ſtand aſtoniſhed at this greateſt of all God's Works. The Creator of the Univerſe on the Croſs! dying as a propitiatory Sacrifice for Sin! offering up Himſelf to his *Father*, as a Sacrifice of Atonement for the Sins of the World!—That by Faith in his Blood we might be juſtified and ſaved.

And was there indeed ſuch infinite Goodneſs in the divine Nature, that God could find it in his Heart to do this Thing! a Thing, of a Nature ſuperior, infinitely ſuperior to the Creation of Thouſands and Millions of ſuch Worlds as this! And was Sin indeed ſuch an infinite Evil, that nothing could expiate it, but ſuch a Sacrifice as this! Sin, which we, ſtupid Mortals, ſee ſo little Evil in! And did the *eternal Father* value the Honour of his Law and Government more than the Life of his *Son!* And if theſe Things were done in the green Tree, what will be done in the dry! Where will the unrighteous and ungodly appear, when this Jeſus comes in flaming Fire to take Vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the Goſpel! How vain will it be to cry for Mercy! how vain to hope that impartial Juſtice will relent! The Son of God prayed, "O my "Father, if it be poſſible, let this Cup paſs from "me;" and even agonized in Blood!—But it was not poſſible: Juſtice muſt be ſatisfied: the Son of God himſelf muſt die: therefore impenitent, Chriſtleſs Sinners cannot eſcape: nor can they ever be releaſed: But "the Smoke of their Torment will "aſcend for ever and ever."

That God is in Earneſt, when he threatens to puniſh impenitent Sinners with eternal Damnation, cannot be made more evident, than it is by the Croſs of Chriſt. However, it may be more attended to, and ſo work a more univerſal Coviction. Yet their eternal Damnation, it ſelf, will not be a greater

Proof,

Proof, that God was in earneſt, than the Death of his Son on the Croſs.—The whole intelligent Syſtem have here the ſtrongeſt Evidence of the impartial Rectitude of the divine Nature, and of the Inflexibility of the divine Juſtice, that can poſſibly be given. And at the ſame Time, the boundleſs Goodneſs of the divine Nature ſet in the cleareſt Point of Light.——Wherefore, to conclude, let us here behold the "Glory of God in the Face of Jeſus "Chriſt;" that beholding "in this Glaſs, the Glory "of the Lord, we may be changed into the ſame "Image, from Glory to Glory. That ſo the Goſ-"pel may become the Power of God to our Salva-"tion. That while Chriſt crucified is to ſome a "ſtumbling-Block, and to others Fooliſhneſs, He "may be to us the Power of God, and the Wiſdom "of God.

Now to him "who loved us and gave himſelf "for us, be Glory, Honour and Praiſe for ever and "ever." Amen.———Even

To HIM, who is "the Alpha and the Omega, "the Almighty, the ſame Yeſterday, to Day, and "forever, who is God, the true God, the mighty "God, the holy one of Iſrael, ſitting on a Throne "high and lifted up, God over all bleſſed for ever, "by whom and for whom all Things were created" —even to HIM let "every Knee bow in Heaven and "on Earth:"—and it will be ſo far from derogating or detracting from the Honour, that it will be "*to* "the Glory of God the Father." For, "he and his "Father are ONE."—Yea, "there are Three that "bear Record in Heaven, the Father, the Word, "and the Holy Ghoſt: and theſe three are ONE." And to this ONE GOD in three Perſons, to whom we were dedicated in Baptiſm, and from whom all Bleſſings flow to us, even to HIM, be aſcribed "the "Kingdom, Power, and Glory for ever." Amen.

The

The MILLENNIUM.

REVELATION, XX. 1, 2, 3.

And I saw an Angel come down from Heaven, having the Key of the bottomleſs Pit, and a great Chain in his Hand. And he laid hold on the Dragon, that old Serpent, which is the Devil and Satan, and bound him a Thouſand Years. And caſt him into the bottomleſs Pit, and ſhut him up, and ſet a Seal upon him, that he ſhould deceive the Nations no more, till the Thouſand Years ſhould be fulfilled.

IN a great Variety of Reſpects, the BIBLE is the moſt remarkable Book in the World. In it we have God's moral Character clearly exhibited to View, by a Hiſtory of his Conduct, as moral Governor of the World from the beginning: and the Nature of fallen Man painted to the Life, by a Hiſtory of their Behaviour for four Thouſand Years. In it we have opened the glorious and aſtoniſhing Method, that has been entered upon, to diſappoint all Satan's Deſigns, by the Interpoſition of the Son of God; and are informed of his Birth, Life, Death, Reſurrection, Aſcenſion and Exaltation, and of the glorious Deſigns he has in View. And the whole is ſo contrived as to be admirably ſuited to all the Circumſtances and Needs of a good Man; That,

as it was designed to be the good Man's Book, in a peculiar Sense, so it is perfectly suited to his Case. "It is profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, for Instruction in Righteousness, that the Man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished to all good Works." (2 *Tim.* III. 16, 17.)

That sincere Concern for the Cause of Truth and Virtue, for the Honour of God and Interest of true Religion, which is peculiar to a good Man, whose Character it is to love Christ above Father and Mother, Wife and Children, Houses and Lands, yea, better than his own Life, must naturally subject him to a peculiar Kind of Solicitude. Even as a Child of a truly filial Spirit, is pained when it goes ill with his Father's Family, to whose Interest he is closely attached; and has a whole System of inward Sensations, that a Stranger intermeddles not with.—The Bible, the good Man's Book, is, therefore, wisely adapted to ease the good Man's pained Heart, and afford Consolation in this interesting and most important Point; as it gives the strongest Assurances that the Cause of Vertue shall finally prevail.

How insupportable must the Grief of the pious Jews have been, sitting on the Sides of the Rivers of Babylon! "There we sat down," say they, "yea, "we wept when we remembred Zion." And "on "the Willows they hung their Harps," nor could any Thing divert their Minds. "If I forget thee, O "Jerusalem, let my right Hand forget her Cunning. "If I do not remember thee, let my Tongue cleave "to the Roof of my Mouth." (*Psal.* CXXXVII.) —How insupportable, I say, must their Grief have been, while their glorious holy Temple, and their holy City, the Place of all their sacred Solemnities, were lying desolate, and God's People in Captivity, had it not been for that Promise, so often repeated, that after seventy Years God would visit them, and

cause

cauſe them to return to their own Land. God knew before-hand the Anguiſh, which would be apt to fill their Hearts, the ſinking Diſcouragements, and all the Train of dark and gloomy Thoughts, they would be incident to; and before-hand provided a Remedy. Yea, no ſooner had he denounced their Doom in the XXXIXth Chapter of *Iſaiah*, but immediately in the next Chapter, and for ten or twenty Chapters together, does he provide for their Support. "Comfort ye, comfort ye, my People; ſpeak com-"fortably to Jeruſalem, &c. &c.

So, how inſupportable would have been the Grief of the Church of Chriſt, thro' the long, dark, cruel Reign of myſtical Babylon, while they beheld Error and Wickedneſs univerſally prevail, Satan getting his Will in almoſt every Thing, and to Appearance no Signs of better Times, but all Things wearing a dreadful Aſpect before their Eyes; how great their Grief; how ſinking their Diſcouragements, how almoſt inſuperable their Temptations to apoſtatize, and forſake a Cauſe that Heaven ſeemed to forſake, had not the Day of Deliverance been expreſly foretold, and the Glory that ſhould follow opened to View, by the Spirit of Prophecy! But in a firm Belief that the Cauſe they were engaged in, and for which they ſpilt their Blood, would finally prevail; and prevail in this World, where they then beheld Satan reigning and triumphing, I ſay, in a firm Belief of this, the whole Army of Martyrs could march on to Battle couragiouſly, willing to ſacrifice their Lives in the Cauſe, not doubting of final Victory, altho' they themſelves muſt fall in the Field.

Indeed, were the Salvation of his own Soul the only Thing the good Man had in View, he would naturally be quite eaſy upon a full Aſſurance that this was ſecured. So, had Moſes cared for nothing

but the Welfare of himſelf and of his Poſterity, he might have been ſatisfied, while the whole Congregation of Iſrael were deſtroyed, if he might become a great Nation, and that without any Sollicitude for the Honour of the GREAT NAME of the GOD of Iſrael: Yea, altho' the Idolatrous Nations round about were fully eſtabliſhed in the Belief of the Divinity of their Idols, and brought to look upon the GOD of the Hebrews with ever ſo great Contempt by the Means. But, attached as he was to the Honour of the God of Iſrael, nothing could give him Satisfaction, but a Proſpect that that would be ſecured. The Welfare of himſelf and of his Family was of no Importance in his Eſteem, compared with this. (See *Exod.* XXXII.)

IT muſt, therefore, be remembred, that, as the SON of God left his Father's Boſom, and the Realms of Light and Glory, and expired on the Croſs in the utmoſt viſible Contempt, that he might ſpoil Principalities and Powers, bruiſe the Serpent's Head, deſtroy the Works of the Devil; ſo his true Diſciples have imbibed a Meaſure of the ſame Spirit; and, as Voluntiers enliſted under his Banner, have the ſame Thing in View: they long for the Deſtruction of Satan's Kingdom: and theſe Petitions are the genuine Language of their Hearts, "Our "Father which art in Heaven, hallowed be thy "Name, thy Kingdom come, thy Will be done on "Earth as it is in Heaven." Nor can the Salvation of their own Souls, altho' ever ſo ſafely ſecured, ſatisfy their Minds, without a clear View and fair Proſpect of Chriſt's final Victory over all his Enemies. "But if our great GENERAL, who has "ſacrificed his Life in the Cauſe, may but at laſt "obtain a compleat Victory, notwithſtanding all "the preſent dark Appearances; This is enough," ſays the Chriſtian Soldier: "I am willing to ſtique

"all

" all in his Service, and die in the Battle too. " But if Satan were always to carry the Day, Oh " who could live under the Thought !"

THIS having been the Temper of good Men, more or leſs, even from the early Ages of the World, and thro' all ſucceſſive Generations to this Day, they have evidently wanted a peculiar Support, which the Reſt of Mankind ſtood in no Need of, to carry them comfortably thro' ſuch a long Scene of Darkneſs; Wickedneſs prevailing, God diſhonoured, Satan triumphing, the World periſhing, the true Church of God more generally in Sackcloth. And accordingly the final Victory of the Cauſe of Truth and Virtue was intimated in the very firſt Promiſe made to fallen Man. And from Time to Time God repeated this comfortable Prediction to his Church and People; and finally made it the chief Subject of the laſt Book of holy Scripture, he ordered to be wrote for the Uſe of his Church.

Now let us take a brief View of the whole Series of theſe divine Predictions, from the Beginning of the World, even down to this in our Text, contained in one of the laſt Chapters in the Bible; that we may ſee what full Evidence there is of this Truth; and ſo, what abundant Cauſe for Conſolation to all the People of God.

I. IMMEDIATELY after the Fall, when the Serpent, even that old Serpent the Devil, had juſt ſeduced Mankind to revolt from God, and had, to all Appearance, laid this whole World in perpetual Ruin, even in the Depths of this Midnight-Darkneſs, a Ray of Light ſhone down from Heaven—*The Seed of the Woman ſhall bruiſe the Serpent's Head.* (*Gen.* III. 15) As if God had ſaid, " I ſee the " Scheme that Satan has laid to ruin the World, and " eſtabliſh his impious, malicious Cauſe: I ſee it, " and I am determined to defeat it. The feebler

" Woman

" Woman he has over-matched, but her almighty " Seed shall conquer him, and as effectually subdue " him, and prevent all future Mischief by him, " as a Serpent is subdued and incapacitated for " further Mischief, when his Head is crushed to Pie- " ces, under the indignant Heel of one determined " on his Death." This was a compleat Doom indeed denounced against Satan, at the Head of the Kingdom of Darkness. And it fully implied, that the Cause of Light, Truth and Righteousness should finally obtain a compleat Victory.

II. AFTER this gracious and glorious Promise had been the chief Foundation of all the Hopes of God's People for two Thousand Years, God was pleased to point out the particular Family from whence this mighty Deliverer should spring, and to intimate what a universal Blessing he should be to all the Nations of the Earth. *And in thy* SEED *shall* ALL *the Families of the Earth be blessed*, said God to Abraham. (*Gen.* XII. 3.) Which again plainly supposed, that the Cause of Truth and Righteousness, notwithstanding the dark State the World then was in, all sinking fast into Idolatry, and would for many Ages be in, buried in heathenish Darkness, should yet in due Time universally prevail over the whole Earth. For *in thy Seed shall* ALL *the Families of the Earth be blessed.* This same Promise was repeated again and and again to Abraham, and afterwards to Isaac and to Jacob.

III. HITHERTO God had supported his People's Hopes chiefly with Promises, with verbal Predictions; but from the Days of Moses to the Days of Solomon King of Israel, to assist his People's Faith, God did, besides repeated Promises of the same Thing, by a great Variety of wonderful Works shadow forth the glorious Day: And at the same Time shew, that he had sufficient Wisdom and Power to accomplish

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the greateſt Deſigns. That his People might be convinced, that he could eaſily bring to paſs, for the Good of his Church, whatſoever ſeemed Good in his Sight.

Israel in the Egyptian Bondage were a deſigned Type of a fallen World under the Dominion and Tyranny of Satan. Nor was Pharoah more loth to let Iſrael go, than Satan is to have his Subjects deſert him, and his Kingdom go to Ruin. But notwithſtanding all the ſeeming Impoſſibilities in the Way of Iſrael's Deliverance, infinite Wiſdom knew how to accompliſh the divine Deſigns. God could even cauſe a Member of Pharoah's Family to educate one to be an Inſtrument of this deſigned Deliverance. And in due Time, behold, all the Armies of Iſrael march forth from the Land of Egypt, out of the Houſe of Bondage; and Pharaoh, and his Chariots, and all his Hoſt, lie buried in the Red Sea! So eaſily can God bring forth his People even out of the Anti-Chriſtian Kingdom, which is ſpiritually called Sodom and Egypt. And, if he pleaſes, raiſe up the Inſtruments of this glorious Work, even in the Court of Rome.

And when the Name of the true God was almoſt forgotten thro' all the Earth, and the Devil worſhipped in his Room, in Idols of various Names, thro' all the Nations, God knew how to make his Name known, and to cauſe his Fame to ſpread abroad, and fill the whole Earth with his Glory, by Wonders wrought in the Land of Ham, by deſcending on Mount Sinai, by leading the Armies of Iſrael forty Years in the Wilderneſs in a Pillar of Cloud by Day, and of Fire by Night, giving them Bread from Heaven and Water out of the flinty Rock, dividing Jordan, delivering up one and thirty idolatrous Kings to the Sword of Joſhua, raiſing up Judges one after another in a miraculous Manner

to deliver his People, until the Days of David and Solomon, Types of Chriſt. Of David, who Meſſiah-like ſubdued the Enemies of Iſrael all around: of Solomon, who built the holy Temple and filled Jeruſalem with Riches and Glory.——He, who hath done all theſe Things, can eaſily accompliſh all the Deſigns of his Heart, preſerve his Church, raiſe up Deliverance, break to Pieces the Kingdoms of the Earth for her Sake, make Truth victorious, and ſet up the new Jeruſalem in all her ſpiritual Glory, build up his Church as a glorious holy Temple, and ſet the Son of David upon the Throne; by whoſe Hands, Satan and all the Powers of Darkneſs ſhall be ſubdued, chained, ſealed up in the bottomleſs Pit, as much afraid, and as much unable to attempt any Miſchief, as the ſubdued Nations around Iſrael were in the very Height of David's Power.

But when ſhall the Son of David reign, and the Church have Reſt? When ſhall the Cauſe of Truth and Righteouſneſs thus prevail? Perhaps the very Time was deſigned to be ſhadowed forth in the Law of Moſes, in the Inſtitution of their holy Days. The *ſeventh Day*, ſaid God, who always had this glorious Seaſon of Reſt in View, "The ſeventh "Day ſhall be a Sabbath of Reſt, the ſeventh "Month ſhall be full of holy Days, the ſeventh "Year ſhall be a Year of Reſt:" So, perhaps, after *ſix Thouſand* Years are ſpent in Labour and Sorrow by the Church of God, the *ſeven Thouſandth* ſhall be a Seaſon of ſpiritual Reſt and Joy, an holy Sabbath to the Lord.—And as God the Creator was *ſix Days* in forming a confuſed Chaos into a beautiful World, and reſted the *ſeventh*; ſo God the Redeemer, after *ſix Thouſand* Years Labour in the Work of the new Creation, may reſt on the *ſeventh*.—— And then proclaim a general Liberty to an enſlaved World,

World, and grant a general Pardon to a guilty Race; as in the Year of *Jubilee*, among the Jews, every enslaved Jew was set at Liberty, and the Debts of all the indebted were cancelled.

IV. THESE Things, thus shadowed forth in Types, were also expressly declared by the Mouths of the ancient Prophets, from the Days of David and forward to the End of that Dispensation: and the same Things are hinted here and there in the New-Testament, and largely opened to View in the Revelation of St. John. So that both the Old and New Testaments join to raise in us, who live in these Ages, the highest Assurance, that it is God's Design to "give to his Son the Heathen for his In-"heritance, and the uttermost Parts of the Earth "for his Possession." (*Psal.* II. 8.) For all Kings "shall bow down before him, and all Nations shall "serve him. (*Psal.* LXXII. 11.) And the Moun-"tain of the Lord's House shall be established in "the Top of the Mountains, and shall be exalted "above the Hills, and all Nations shall flow unto "it. (*Isai.* II. 2.) They shall beat their Swords into "Plow-shares, and their Spears into pruning Hooks, "and learn War no more. (*ver.* 4.) For the Earth "shall be full of the Knowledge of the Lord, as "the Waters cover the Sea. (*Isai.* XI. 9.) A Nation "shall be born in a Day. (*Isai.* LXVI. 8.) All thy "People shall be righteous. (*Isai.* LX. 21.) They "shall all know the Lord, from the least to the "greatest. (*Jer.* XXXI. 24.) And Holiness to the "Lord shall be written on every Thing. (*Zech.* "XIV. 20, 21.) Kings shall become nursing Fa-"thers, and Queens nursing Mothers (*Isai.* XLIX. "23.) and there shall be nothing to hurt or offend. "(*Isai.* XI. 9.) The Inhabitant shall not [so much "as] say, I am sick. (*Jer.* XXXIII. 24.) And this "Kingdom shall fill the whole Earth. (*Dan.* II. 35.)

"And

" And all Nations and Languages ſhall ſerve him. " (*Dan.* VII. 14.) And the Kingdom and Do- " minion, and the Greatneſs of the Kingdom under " the whole Heaven ſhall be given to the People " of the Saints of the moſt high God. (*Dan.* VII. " 27.) and the Jews ſhall be called in, and the Ful- " neſs of the Gentiles. (*Rom.* XI. 12—32.) For the " Goſpel ſhall be preached to every Nation, and " Kindred, and Tongue, and People. (*Rev.* XIV. 6.) " And Satan ſhall be bound, and Chriſt ſhall reign " on Earth a Thouſand Years." * And as ſurely as the Jews were delivered out of the babyloniſh Captivity, and Babylon itſelf deſtroyed; even ſo ſurely ſhall all theſe Things be accompliſhed in their Time. And myſtical Babylon ſhall " ſink as a Mill-ſtone into " the

* *Satan ſhall be bound*, &c. " The Church of Chriſt " ſhall enjoy Purity of Religion in Peace, without any " Diſturbance from thoſe old Enemies of Mankind, " working in the Children of Diſobedience."

Daubuz on the Place.

" And this ſeems to imply, that all ſhall be converted— " However, if there be any that remain unconverted, " they will, during the Impriſonment of Satan, be in " ſo ſmall a Number, and ſo feeble in Compariſon of the " true Chriſtians, that they ſhall neither dare, nor be " able to diſturb the Peace of Chriſt's Kingdom."

Lowman on the Place.

A Spirit of ſtrict Piety ſhall riſe ſo high, and ſo univerſally prevail, that it ſhall be as tho' all the Martyrs of former Ages were riſen from the Dead, and appeared upon the Stage all at once. This ſeems to be the Senſe of thoſe Words in *Rev.* XX. 4. The Martyrs are ſaid to riſe from the Dead, and reign with Chriſt a Thouſand Years, much in the ſame Senſe as *John* the *Baptiſt* is called *Elias*, viz. becauſe he was a Man ſo nearly reſembling that celebrated Prophet. See *Lowman* on the Place.

" the Sea, and ſhall be found no more at all." (*Rev.* XVIII. 21.)

V. But when ſhall theſe Things be?—I anſwer, in the firſt Place, it is plain, as yet they have not been, theſe great Things have not been accompliſhed. They were not accompliſhed when the Jews were brought out of their babyloniſh Captivity: for, from thence to the Coming of Chriſt, they never were in ſo flouriſhing a State as they had been before. They were not accompliſhed in the apoſtolick Age: For, St. John, when moſt, if not all, of the other Apoſtles were dead, ſpake of theſe Things (in the *Revelation*) as yet to come to paſs. They were not accompliſhed in the three firſt Centuries: for, that was almoſt one continued Scene of Blood. They were not accompliſhed in the Days of Conſtantine the Great: for, it is ſince then that *the Man of Sin has been revealed.* Nor are they accompliſhed to this Day: for, Satan is ſtill walking to and fro thro' the Earth, and going up and down therein; Babylon is not fallen; the Jews are not called; nor is the Fulneſs of the Gentiles come in; but the greateſt Part of the Earth to this Day ſit in heatheniſh Darkneſs.

When then ſhall they be accompliſhed?—Not till " the holy City has been troden under Foot " forty two Months"—Not till " the Witneſſes have " propheſied a Thouſand, two Hundred and Three- " ſcore Days, cloathed in Sackcloth." (*Rev.* XI. 2, 3.) —And not till " the Woman has been in the Wil- " derneſs a Time and Times and half a Time." (*Rev.* XII. 14.) Now a Time and Times and half a Time, i. e. three Years and a half, is equal to forty two Months; which is equal to one Thouſand two Hundred and ſixty Days; which doubtleſs means 1260 Years, a Day for a Year: As the Event has [illegible]ed was the Caſe in the Prophecy of Daniel, who declared

declared it to be 70 Weeks, from the going forth of the Commandment to build Jerusalem, to the Death of Christ. For it proved to be 490 Years, which is 7 Times 70, a Day for a Year. (*Dan.* IX. 24.)

So that there is no Difficulty in determining the Downfall of Antichrist, but what arises from the Uncertainty we are at when to date the Beginning of his Rise and Reign. The Bishops of Rome were some Hundred Years rising gradually from the honest Character of a Scripture-Bishop to the Grand Title of *universal Pope*, which was obtained, *A. D.* 606.——And it was a long Time from this, before they got to the Height of their Grandeur, and the Pope was constituted a *temporal Prince*, which was not till *A. D.* 756. *——And perhaps he may fall as gradually as he rose. And as now he has been falling 240 Years, even ever since the Beginning of the *Reformation*; so we may rationally expect he will continue to fall, till *Babylon* sinks *as a Millstone into the Sea.* And then "the Mountains and the "Hills shall break forth into singing, and all the "Trees of the Field shall clap their Hands." (*Isai.* LV. 12.) And all the Hosts of Heaven as loud as Thunder, shall say, "Hallelujah! For the Lord "God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and "rejoice, and give Honour to him; for the Marriage "of the Lamb is come, and his Wife hath made "herself ready." (*Rev.* XIX. 6, 7.)

And thus we have taken a brief View of the Scripture-Evidence, that the Cause of Truth and Righteousness will finally become gloriously victorious.

VI. Nor is there the least Reason to doubt the Accomplishment of these Things. For,—God in all Times past has been faithful to his Word,—

* See Bowers History of the Popes.

is evidently sufficiently engaged in this Affair—knows how, and can easily accomplish it—and it will be much to the Honour of his great Name to do it.

God has been faithful to his Promises to his Church from the Beginning of the World. To all human Appearance, it was a very unlikely Thing, that the Hebrews, inslaved in Egypt, under Pharaoh, a very powerful Monarch, and sunk down into Idolatry, and very low-spirited, should arise, and go forth with all their Flocks and Herds, and march thro' the Wilderness, and conquer the seven Nations of Canaan, and possess their Land. And so it was to all human Appearance equally unlikely, that the Jews in Babylon should ever return to their own Land. But God had promised in both Cases, and God performed. And an Event more surprizing than either of these, yea, the most astonishing that could have happened, has also come to pass, just as God had said. The promised Seed has been born, and the Serpent has *bruised his Heel*; and methinks now not only God's Faithfulness, but even the Nature of the Case itself, should lead us to believe, that *the* Seed *shall bruise his Head*.

For, after God has appeared to be so *infinitely engaged* to destroy the Works of the Devil, as to give his only begotten Son, it can surely never once be imagined, that he wants sufficient Resolution to carry him thro' what yet remains to be done.

And He, who could send Pharaoh's Daughter to take up Moses, when an Infant, out of his Basket of Bulrushes, and educate him in Pharaoh's Court, that he might be skilled in all the Arts of Government; and when he had spent forty Years in this Situation, banish him into the Land of Midian, that in the solitary Life of a Shepherd for another forty Years, he might attain to be the meekest Man on Earth; that he might, by both, be thoroughly qua-

lified for the Work designed him :—And He, who could take David from feeding his Father's Sheep, and, after a Course of Trials, so exceeding necessary to prepare frail Man for high Honours and great Usefulness, exalt him to the Throne of Israel, so thoroughly furnished to head their Armies and subdue their Foes, advance their external Grandeur, and put great Honour upon their Religion :—And He, who could take Daniel, one of the Jewish Captives in Babylon, and raise him to such high Honour and great Authority, to be a Father to his People thro' their seventy Years Captivity, and by his Means (perhaps) influence Cyrus so generously to release them, and assist them in their Return : * —And finally, He, who could take a Number of poor illiterate Fishermen, and the persecuting Saul, and by them lay the Foundation of the Christian Church, in Spite of the united Opposition of Earth and Hell ; and after their Death cause the Christian Church to live thro', yea, at last to triumph over, the ten bloody Persecutions, and even conquer the Roman Empire ; and

* As Daniel understood the Prophecies of Jeremiah, which had determined the Time of the Captivity to be 70 Years (*Dan.* IX. 2.) and had his Heart so much in the Affair of their Return, as to *set his Face to seek the Lord by Fasting and Prayer ;* (*ver.* 3.) and being the chief Man in the Kingdom must have free Access, to Cyrus ; (*Dan.* VI.) so nothing could be more natural than to shew him an ancient Jewish Prophecy, wherein he was mentioned by Name, near 200 Years ago, and pointed out as the Person who was to let go the Jewish Captives, build Jerusalem, and lay the Foundation of the Temple. *Isai.* XLIV. 28. & Chap. XLV. 1—3. To which Cyrus no doubt refers in his Proclamation. *Ezr.* I. 2, 3, 4. " Thus " saith Cyrus King of Persia, The Lord God of Heaven hath " given me all the Kingdoms of the Earth, and he hath " CHARGED me to build him an House at Jerusalem, " which is in Judah. Who is there among you," &c.

and that which is ſtill more wonderful, to ſubſiſt to this Day, notwithſtanding all the ſubtle and cruel Methods, which have for ſo many Hundred Years been taken by Antichriſt to extirpate Chriſtianity out of the World :—I ſay, He who could do theſe Things, cannot be at at a Loſs for Means, or want Power, to effect the glorious Things foretold, which yet remain to be accompliſh'd.

And, what if Mankind are ever ſo eſtranged from God ? And what if they are ever ſo averſe to a Reconciliation ? And what if Satan reigns in the Courts of Princes, in the Councils of the Clergy, as well as in the Cottages of the Poor ? And what if even the whole World in a Manner lies in Wickedneſs ? So that a general Conflagration might rather be expected, as it is ſo eminently deſerved ;— are theſe Things any Bar in the Way ?

What if Mankind have abuſed divine Grace from the Beginning of the World ? What if they have murdered his Prophets, his Son, and his Apoſtles ? What if they have reſiſted and grieved the Holy Spirit, and perverted the Doctrines, and gone counter to the Precepts of his holy Word ? Yea, what if it appears that Mankind are really on Satan's Side ? And this after all the kind Methods God has taken to reclaim a guilty World ? ſo that even the beſt Man on Earth, or the kindeſt Angel in Heaven might be diſcouraged, totally and finally diſcouraged, and think it never worth while to take any more Pains with ſuch a perverſe Race, but that it were more ſuitable to the Rules of good Government to reſign them to Deſtruction ? Are any, or all theſe Things together, a ſufficient Bar to the Accompliſhment of God's Deſigns, whoſe Goodneſs is abſolutely infinite ?

What ! After the Son of God has been offered as a Sacrifice of Atonement, to ſecure the Honour of

the divine Government, and open a Way for the honourable Exercise of his Grace! What, after the Messiah has been exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give Repentance and Remission of Sins! And after all Power and Authority in Heaven and Earth is given into his Hands, on Purpose to destroy the Kingdom of Satan, and bring every Nation, Kindred and Tongue, to bow the Knee to God! yea, when the infinitely wise Governour of the World has before determined to permit the Wickedness of Mankind to come out and stand in so glaring a Light, and to suffer Satan so long to Practise and prosper; to this very Purpose, that his Power, Wisdom and Grace might be the more effectually and the more gloriously displayed, in the Accomplishment of all his glorious Designs!

Instead of being discouraged, from a View of the past or the present State of the World, as without the Light of divine Revelation we should naturally have been; methinks now, viewing all Things in the Light of holy Scripture, it must be perfectly rational to conclude, that all these Things are only preparatory, as an Introduction to the glorious Day; even, as all the cruel Bondage of Israel in Egypt, and all the haughty Conduct of Pharaoh, were but preparatory, as an Introduction to the glorious Event that God had then in his Eye.——And what unspeakable Honour will redound to God most High, if after all the vile Conduct of this apostate World, and notwithstanding all their Ill-desert, and after all the subtle Methods Satan has taken to make his Kingdom strong; I say, what unspeakable Honour will redound to God most High, if after all this he should accomplish his glorious Designs?——And when Things have been ripening these five or six Thousand Years, and are now so nearly every Way prepared for God to get himself a great Name

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in the total Destruction of Satan's Kingdom, can we once imagine that God will let the Opportunity slip? Or rather, ought we not firmly to believe, that when every Thing is quite ripe, then God will arise, make bare his Arm, and fill the whole World with his Glory?

Especially, considering, that as Things stand, the Honour of all his glorious Perfections lies at Stake.—For, ever since the Almighty gave out the Word, that *the Seed of the Woman should bruise the Serpent's Head*, even from that very Day, that old Serpent, with all his Subtilty, has employed his whole Power to defeat the divine Designs, maintain his Kingdom in the World, and escape the dreadful Blow.—He stirred up Cain to kill his Brother, and never left till the whole Earth was filled with Violence, which brought on the general Deluge. And after the Flood he was industrious to divert Mankind from the Knowledge and Worship of the true God, and to establish Idolatry and the Worship of Devils in all the Kingdoms of the Earth. And since Christianity appeared, he has turned himself into every Shape to defeat the gracious Designs of the Gospel, and has prevailed and reigned above a Thousand Years, at the Head of the grand Antichristian Apostacy. And should the Almighty suffer him to go on, and prosper, and finally prevail, what would become of his own great Name? And how great would be their Triumph in the infernal Regions, to think, that in Spight of God and of his Son, from the Beginning to the End of the World, they have held out in a constant War, kept the Field, and at last come off victorious? —— Wherefore, as when God repeats the wonderful Works, which he had done for Israel in the Days of old, in the XXth. Chapter of *Ezekiel*, he constantly says, *I wrought for mine own great Name*, so here, in this Case will he

he do it again, and that in the most eminent Manner. As it is written, *The* ZEAL *of the Lord of Hosts will perform this. Isai.* IX. 7.

So that, in a Word, if almighty Power and infinite Wisdom, at the Head of the Universe, infinitely engaged, are a sufficient Match for the Guilty, impotent Powers of Darkness, then we may depend upon it, Satan will meet with an Overthrow, as notable as did Pharaoh and his Host in the Red-Sea. And as proud Babylon, once the Mistress of Kingdoms, is now no more; so mystical Babylon shall sink as a Millstone in the Sea, and rise no more for ever. And

VII. WHATEVER Mistakes the Jewish Rabbies might fall into, in their Interpretation of Daniel's 70 Weeks, and in their Attempts to fix the precise Time of the Messiah's coming; and whatever mistaken Notions any of them had about the Nature of his Kingdom, as tho' it was to be of this World, and He to appear in all earthly Grandeur; and altho' his Coming, to some might seem to be so long delayed, that they began to give up all Hopes of it, and to contrive some other Meaning to all the ancient Prophecies, or even to call in Question the Inspiration of the Prophets: yet neither the Mistakes of some, nor the Infidelity of others, at all altered the Case. Days and Months and Years hastened along, and one Revolution among the Kingdoms of the Earth followed upon another, till *the Fulness of Time* was come, till all Things were ripe; and then, Behold, the MESSIAH was born. Even so it shall be now.

WHATEVER Mistakes Christian Divines may fall into, in their Interpretation of 666, the Number of the Beast, or in their Endeavours to fix the precise Time when the 1260 Years of Antichrist's Reign shall begin and end; or whatever wrong Notions some

have

have had, or may have about the Nature of the Millennium, as tho' Chriſt was to reign perſonally on Earth; and if ſome, mean while, begin to think, that all Things will go on as they have done, and to conclude, that the the Expectation of theſe glorious Days, which has prevailed in the Chriſtian Church from the Beginning, is merely a groundleſs Fancy: Yet none of theſe Things will at all alter the Caſe. Days and Months and Years will haſten along, and one Revolution among the Kingdoms of the Earth follow upon another, until the Fulneſs of Time is come, till all things are ripe for the Event; and then the Miniſters of Chriſt will accompliſh in Reality, what St. John ſaw in his Viſions:— *I ſaw an Angel fly in the Midſt of Heaven, having the everlaſting Goſpel to preach unto them that dwell on the Earth, and to every Nation and Kindred, and Tongue and People.* (*Rev.* XIV. 6.) And then ſhall it come to paſs, that *the Vail* of Ignorance, which hath ſo long ſpread over all Nations, *ſhall be deſtroyed* (*Iſai.* XXV. 7.) and Knowledge ſhall ſo greatly increaſe, that it ſhall be as tho' the *Light of the Moon* were *as the Light of the Sun, and the Light of the Sun ſeven-fold* (*Iſai.* XXX. 26.) until *the Knowledge of the Lord cover the Earth, as the Waters do the Sea.* (*Iſai.* XI. 9.) And then there *ſhall be nothing to hurt or offend in all God's holy Mountain.* For Babylon ſhall fall, Satan be bound, and Chriſt will reign, and Truth and Righteouſneſs univerſally prevail, a Thouſand Years.

REMARKS and INFERENCES.

I. When, therefore, our Saviour in the Days of his Fleſh, denominated his Followers *a little Flock*, from the Smallneſs of their Number, he had no Deſign to teach us, that this would always be the Caſe. For altho' it was very true, that his Flock was at that

Time *a little Flock*; yet the Day was coming, when that *little Leaven* ſhould *leaven the whole Lump* (*Mat.* XIII. 33.) and *the Stone cut out without Hands* ſhould become *a great Mountain, and fill the whole Earth.* (*Dan.* II. 25.) So, altho' it was a Saying very applicable not only to our Saviour's Day, but to moſt other Periods of the Church, that *many are called and few are choſen*; yet it does not hence follow, that this will be the Caſe when *a Nation ſhall be born in a Day*, and *all the People ſhall be righteous.* And altho' it has commonly been ſo, that of the *Many* who have ſought *to enter in at the ſtrait Gate*, but *Few have been able*, and the *Generality* have from Age to Age gone *in the broad Way, which leads down to Deſtruction*: yet it ſhall be quite otherwiſe, when *Satan is bound, that he may deceive the Nations no more*; and when *all ſhall know the Lord from the leaſt to the greateſt*, when *the Kingdom and the Greatneſs of the Kingdom under the whole Heavens, ſhall be given to the People of the Saints of the Moſt High.*—For it is very plain, that theſe and ſuch like Expreſſions uſed by our Saviour, which were applicable to the then-times, and to moſt other Periods, when the Number of true Converts hath been comparatively very ſmall, were never deſigned to be applicable to that glorious Period yet to come, which is to be the grand Harveſt-Time, when *the Jews* (who are to this Day for that very Purpoſe, no doubt, by divine Providence preſerved a diſtinct People) and *the Fulneſs of the Gentiles ſhall come in.* Nor can it be right to interpret ſuch Expreſſions in ſuch a Senſe, as to render them inconſiſtent with what the Scriptures ſo plainly teach ſhall be the Caſe in the latter Days.——Therefore,

2. NOTWITHSTANDING hitherto but few have been ſaved, there is no Evidence but that yet the greater Part of Mankind may be ſaved. Nothing can be argued againſt this from ſuch Expreſſions as

have

have been juſt mentioned, for the Reaſon already ſuggeſted. Nor can any Thing be argued from any other Paſſages of Scripture; for the Scripture no where teaches, that the greateſt Part of the whole human Race will finally periſh. I am ſenſible, many ſeem to take this for granted, and they are greatly ſtrengthened in this Belief, from a View of the awful State Mankind have been in from the Beginning of the World to this Day. But if we ſhould even grant, that hitherto not One in ten Thouſand have been ſaved, yet it may come to paſs (there may be Time enough for it, and Men enough yet born) I ſay, it may yet come to paſs, that by far the greateſt Part of Mankind may be ſaved.

For, as the Scriptures conſtantly teach, that in theſe glorious Days, univerſal Peace ſhall prevail; and inſtead of War, the Nations ſhall employ their Time in uſeful Labour, *ſhall beat their Swords into Plow-ſhares, and their Spears into Pruning-hooks*; ſo it will naturally come to paſs, that Mankind, who are now in vaſt Multitudes deſtroyed in the Wars from one Generation to another, will be greatly increaſed in Numbers, and plentifully provided for. Only remove Wars, Famines, and all thoſe deſolating Judgments, which the Sins of Mankind have from Age to Age brought down on a guilty World, and let that univerſal Peace and Proſperity take Place, which indeed will naturally reſult from the ſincere Practice of pure Chriſtianity, and Mankind will naturally increaſe, and ſpread, and fill all the Earth. And while every one improves his Time well, and is diligent in his Calling, according to the Rules of our holy Religion, and all Luxury, Intemperance and Extravagance are baniſht from the Nations of the Earth, it is certain that this Globe will be able to ſuſtain with Food and Raiment, a Number of Inhabitants immenſely greater than ever yet dwelt on it

at

at a Time. And now if *all* these shall *know the Lord from the least to the greatest*, as the Scripture asserts, so that *the Knowledge of the Lord shall fill the Earth as the Waters cover the Sea*, for a Thousand Years together, it may easily, yea, it will naturally come to pass, that there will be more saved in these Thousand Years, then ever before dwelt upon the Face of the Earth from the Foundation of the World.

Some indeed understand the Thousand Years in the *Revelation* agreable to other prophetical Numbers in that Book, a Day for a Year. So *the Time, and Times, and half a Time*, i. e. three Years and an half, and the *forty two Months*, and the 1260 *Days*, are no doubt to be reckoned. And if the dark Period is to be reckoned by this Rule, it should seem that the light Period should likewise. For otherwise the dark Period, which in that Book is represented to be the shortest, will indeed be the longest. The 1260 Days longer then the 1000 Years,—and if the 1000 Years is reckoned a Day for a Year, as the Scripture-Year contains 360 Days, so the 1000 Years will amount to 360,000 Years. In which, there might be Millions saved, to One that has been lost.——But not to insist upon this, If this glorious Period is to last only a Thousand Years literally, there may be many more saved than lost.

If it be granted, that it is difficult to compute with any Exactness in such a Case as this, yet it is easy to make such a Computation as may satisfy us in the Point before us. For in Egypt the Hebrews doubled at the Rate of about once in 14 Years; in *New-England* the Inhabitants double in less than 25 Years; it will be moderate therefore to suppose, Mankind in the Millennium, when all the Earth is full of Peace and Prosperity, will double every 50 Years. But at this Rate, there will be Time enough in a Thousand Years to double twenty Times

We

Which would produce such a Multitude of People, as that altho' we should suppose all who live before the Millennium begins, to be lost; yet if all these should be saved, there would be above seventeen Thousand saved, to One that would be lost. As may appear from the Table below.

3. The

1	-	-	-	2
2	-	-	-	4
3	-	-	-	8
4	-	-	-	16
5	-	-	-	32
6	-	-	-	64
7	-	-	-	128
8	-	-	-	256
9	-	-	-	512
10	-	-		1024
11	-	-		2048
12	-	-		4096
13	-	-		8192
14	-	-		16384
15	-	-		32768
16	-	-		65536
17	-	-		131072
18	-	-		262144
19	-	-		524288
20	-	-		1048576
Sum total.				2,097,150

In the first Column, we have the 20 Periods, which 1000 Years will make, at 50 Years to a Period.—In the second Column, we see in what Proportion Mankind will increase, if they are supposed to double in every 50 Years.—At the End of the first Fifty Years, there will be two for one.—And so on—At the End of the 20th Period, there will be above a Million for one.—Now suppose the World to stand 6000 Years before the Millennium—and suppose it in every Age to be as full of Inhabitants as it will be when the Millennium begins——And suppose, through all the 6000 Years, all the Inhabitants of the Earth to have died off and new ones come in their Room, at the Rate of once in 50 Years—6000 Years, at 50 Years to a Period, will be 120 Periods——120 Worlds full—all lost, suppose—yet by the Table we see, that the 7th Period alone (which is 128) would more than counter-ballance the Whole——

Suppose all before the Millennium lost = 120
Suppose all in the Millennium saved = 2097150
Then 120 : 2097150 : : 1 : 17456 $\frac{1}{2}$ Q. E. D.

That

3. THE Periods paſt, that have been ſo dark, ought to be conſidered as introductory to this bright and glorious Scene, and in various Reſpects as preparatory thereto.

AN apoſtate Race, who had joined with the fallen Angels in a Courſe of Rebellion againſt the Governor of the Univerſe, might juſtly have been forſaken of God, and given up to a State of perfect Darkneſs and Woe, from Generation to Generation, entirely under the Power of the Prince of Darkneſs. What has happened, in dark Ages paſt, may help us a-little to realize what might juſtly always have been the woful State of a fallen World. We have had a Specimen of the dreadful Nature and Tendency of Satan's Government, in all the Idolatry, Wickedneſs and Woe, which have filled the World. And we have ſeen a-little what is in the Heart of fallen Man, who have ſlain the Lord's Prophets, crucified his Son, and ſhed the Blood of Thouſands, yea of Millions of his Servants. And what has happened may help us to realize a-little what muſt have been the State of

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That is, above 17000 would be ſaved, to One loſt; which was the Point to be proved.—Therefore nothing hinders, but that the greateſt Part of Mankind may yet be ſaved, if God ſo pleaſes. There is Time enough for it, and may be Men enough yet born. And if theſe Calculations may ſerve to clear up this, they anſwer the End propoſed. What Proportion of Mankind will finally be ſaved, and what loſt, none can tell. It is no where revealed. God was not obliged to ſave One out of all this guilty loſt World. Hitherto the Generality may have periſhed: and the Lord is Righteous — But who can tell, to what a Degree God may yet glorify his Grace? The holy Scriptures encourage us to look for Things exceeding great and glorious; even, for ſuch Events as may put a new Face on all God's paſt Diſpenſations. (See the following Sermons on *the Wiſdom of God in the Permiſſion of Sin.*)

of a fallen World, if Grace had never interposed. At the same Time it hath appeared, after the best contrived Experiments have been sufficiently tried, that it is not in the Heart of fallen Man to repent, nor can he be brought to it by any external Means whatsoever; whereby the absolute Necessity of the Interposition of supernatural Grace hath been set in the most glaring Light.—And now, if after all God should effectually interpose, destroy the Influence of Satan, scatter the Darkness which fills the World, recover Mankind to God, and cause Truth and Righteousness at last to prevail; it would appear to be altogether of God, of his own mere self-moving Goodness and sovereign Grace. And after so long and sore a Bondage, Mankind will be the more sensible of the Greatness of the Deliverance.——Nor can it ever be said by a proud and haughty World, "We did not Need the Influences of divine Grace "to bring us right;" Whenas all other Methods had been sufficiently tried, and tried in vain. But God may justly say, "What could have been done "more to reclaim Mankind, that I have not done? "And to what Purpose would it have been, to have "taken one Step further? I tried them enough. "There was no Hope. Their Heart was a Heart "of Stone.——Therefore, behold, I, even I will "take away the Heart of Stone, and give an Heart "of Flesh; and an apostate World shall be asham-"ed and confounded, and shall never open their "Mouth, when I shall do all these Things for them."

We are apt to wonder why these glorious Days should be so long delayed, if God indeed intends such Mercy to Men.—But God infinitely wise, knows what is best;—knows how to conduct the Affairs of the Universe; knows when is the fittest Time to introduce this glorious State of Things; knows when Matters will be all ripened, and every Thing

in the moral World prepared ; so that this glorious Day may be ushered in to the best Advantage, in a Manner most suited to honour God and his Son, to humble a haughty World, and to disappoint Satan most grievously, after all his wily Schemes, great Success, and high Expectations :—I say, God knows when this will be : And this is the very Time he has fixed upon for this glorious Work.

4. It therefore becomes all the Followers of Christ, in their several Spheres, in under firm Belief of these Things, to be of good Courage, and exert themselves to the utmost, in the Use of all proper Means, to suppress Error and Vice of every Kind, and promote the Cause of Truth and Righteousness in the World ; and so be Workers together with God.

If one stood at the Head of this glorious Army, which has been in the Wars above these five Thousand Years, and has lived thro' many a dreadful Campaign, and were allowed to make a Speech to these veteran Troops upon this glorious Theme, he might lift up his Voice, and say, "Hail, noble Heroes ! brave Followers of the Lamb ! Your General has sacrificed his Life in this glorious Cause, and spoiled Principalities and Powers on the Cross ! and now he lives and reigns. He reigns on high, with all Power in Heaven and Earth in his Hands. Your Predecessors, the Prophets, Apostles and Martyrs, with undaunted Courage have marched into the Field of Battle, and conquered dying ! and now reign in Heaven ! Behold, ye are risen up in their Room, are engaged in the same Cause, and the Time of the last general Battle draws on, when a glorious Victory is to be won. And altho' many a valiant Soldier may be slain in the Field ; yet the Army shall drive all before them at last. And Satan being

conquered,

" conquered, and all the Powers of Darkneſs driven
" out of the Field, and confined to the bottomleſs
" Pit, ye ſhall reign with Chriſt a thouſand Years.
" reign in Love and Peace, while Truth and Righ-
" teouſneſs ride triumphant thro' the Earth.——
" Wherefore lay aſide every Weight, and, with
" your Hearts wholly intent on this grand Affair,
" gird up your Loyns, and with all the ſpiritual
" Weapons of Faith, Prayer, Meditation, Watch-
" fulneſs, &c. with redoubled Zeal and Courage
" fall on your ſpiritual Enemies. Slay every Luſt
" that yet lurks within, as knowing your domeſtic
" Foes are the moſt dangerous. And with Gentle-
" neſs, Meekneſs and Wiſdom, by your holy Con-
" duct, your pious Examples, your kind Inſtructi-
" ons, your friendly Admonitions, ſpread theSavour
" of divine Knowledge all around you, as ye are
" ſcattered here and there thro' a benightedWorld;
" labouring to win Souls to Chriſt, to induce the
" deluded Followers of Satan to deſert his Camp,
" and inliſt as Volunteers under your Prince MES-
" SIAH.——And if the Powers of Darkneſs ſhould
" rally all their Forces, and a general Battle thro'
" all the Chriſtian World come on; O, love not
" your Lives to the Death! Sacrifice every earthly
" Comfort in the glorious Cauſe! Sing the Tri-
" umphs of your victorious General, in Priſons and
" at the Stake! And die couragiouſly, firmly be-
" lieving the Cauſe of Truth and Righteouſneſs
" will finally prevail."

SURELY it is infinitely unbecoming the Followers of him who is *King of Kings and Lord of Lords*, to turn aſide to earthly Purſuits, or to ſink down in unmanly Diſcouragements, or to give Way to Sloth and Effeminacy, when there is ſo much to be done, and the glorious Day is coming on. How ſhould thoſe who handle the Pen of the Writer, exert

themſelves to explain and vindicate divine Truths, and paint the Chriſtian Religion in all its native Glories? How ſhould the Pulpit be animated, from Sabbath to Sabbath, with Sermons full of Knowledge and Light, full of Spirit and Life, full of Zeal for God, and Love to Men, and tender Pity to infatuated Sinners? Chriſt loves to have his Miniſters faithful, whether the Wicked will hear or not.—— And let pious Parents be unwearied in their Prayers for, and Inſtructions of their Children, and never faint under any Diſcouragements; as knowing, that Chriſt is exalted to give Repentance and Remiſſion of Sins, and can do it for whom he will. Bring your Children and Friends, with all their ſpiritual Diſeaſes, and lay them at his Feet; as once they did their Sick, when this kind Saviour dwelt on Earth.— Let pious Perſons of every Age, and in every Capacity, awake from Sleep, and ariſe from the Dead, and live and act worthy their glorious Character and high Expectations; and in their ſeveral Stations exert themſelves to the utmoſt to promote the Redeemer's glorious Cauſe.—Let this Age do their Share, as David, altho' the Temple was not to be built in his Day, yet exerted himſelf to lay up Materials for that magnificent Edifice, on which his Heart was intently ſet; as knowing, that in his Son's Day it would be ſet up in all its Glory. So let us riſe up, and with the greateſt Alacrity contribute our utmoſt towards this Building, this living Temple, this Temple all made of lively Stones, of Stones alive, in which God is to dwell, and which will infinitely exceed in Glory the Temple of Solomon, that was built of dead Timber and lifeleſs Stones.—And let this be our daily Prayer, an Anſwer to which we may be aſſured of, whatever other Requeſts are denied us, *Our Father which art in Heaven, &c.—for thine is the Kingdom, the Power, and the Glory, for ever.* AMEN.

The

The WISDOM of God in the Permission of SIN.

SERMON I.

GENESIS L. 20.

——*YE thought Evil against Me; but God meant it unto Good*——

JACOB being dead and buried, and Joseph still Governor over all the Land of Egypt, his guilty Brethren began to be afraid, that Joseph, in whose Power they now were, and at whose Mercy they now lay, would requite them Evil, for the inhuman, barbarous Deed they had formerly committed, in selling him for a Slave, notwithstanding all his Cries and Tears, and the Anguish of his Soul. Wherefore having first sent Messengers to him, to pacify him, and beg his Pardon; they venture at last into his Presence, and fall down before his Face, and resign to his Mercy, saying, "Behold, we be "thy Servants." *i. e.* We have nothing to say for ourselves; we are verily guilty: we are in thy Power; we surrender ourselves to thy Disposal, Upon which, Joseph said unto them, "Fear not" any Harm

from me. " For am I in the Place of GOD," the righteous Judge of the World, to whom Vengeance belongs, and with whom you had Need make your Peace! 'Tis true indeed, ye acted a barbarous and cruel Part, " Ye tho't Evil againſt me: but God," who had the ordering of the whole Affair, " meant " it for *Good*, to bring to paſs as it is this Day, to " ſave much People alive." And while I behold the Wiſdom and Goodneſs of God, ſo conſpicuous in this Diſpenſation, I have no Diſpoſition to revenge the Injury you did me. Therefore fear not: for inſtead of requiting you the Evil, you are ſenſible you deſerve, for your ill Treatment of me, I will rather, in Imitation of God, who hath been ſo kind to me in all my Diſtreſſes, treat you with all Goodneſs. " I will nouriſh you and your little Ones. Thus he comforted them, and ſpake kindly to them."

AT the ſame Time Joſeph viewed the Conduct of his Brethren, and conſidered their Temper and Deſigns, and the Heinousneſs of their Crime; he alſo beheld the Hand of God, which he as plainly ſaw in the whole Affair, permitting and over-ruling his Brethren's Sin, to anſwer good and noble Ends: And this indiſpoſed him to any angry Reſentments, and framed his Soul only to Gratitude to God, and Love and Kindneſs to his Brethren. His ſeeing the Hand of God in it, or to uſe his own Language, his ſeeing that " God meant" he ſhould be ſold, and that it was " God who ſent him thither," together with the happy Experience he had had of the Wiſdom and Goodneſs of God in the Affair, not only prepared him to forgive his Brethren; but to treat them with all poſſible Tenderneſs, and fraternal Goodneſs. So that he was not only fully ſatisfied in the Wiſdom of God in the Permiſſion of that Sin; but was thereby the better prepared to do his Duty.

DOCTRINE.

DOCTRINE. "A Sight of the Wisdom of God in the Permission of Sin, is very useful to promote Holiness of Heart and Life: It has a great Tendency to make us feel right, and behave well."

THUS it was with Joseph, as we have seen. And thus it was with *Job*, who, while the Sabeans wickedly robbed him, eyed the Hand of God, and said, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, and blessed be the Name of the Lord."* And thus it was with *David*, while Shimei wickedly abused him, going along on the Hill over against him, as he was fleeing out of Jerusalem from the Hands of Absalom his Son, and cursed him as he went, saying, "Come out, come out, thou bloody Man."—"Let him Curse" says David, "for the Lord hath "bidden him."† 'I justly deserve it at the Hands of the Majesty of Heaven, against whom I have grievously sinned.——A bloody Man indeed I am!—O *Uriah! Uriah!*——I shall never forget the Blood of the valiant *Uriah!*'

BUT it is needless to multiply Instances. For nothing is plainer, than that it must tend to bring us to a right Temper of Mind, in every Circumstance of Life, to view infinite Wisdom, as ordering all Things which concern us, in the wisest and best Manner. Nor could any Tho't be more shocking to a pious Mind, than to conceive the DEITY as unconcerned in human Affairs,—the Devil ruling in the Children of Disobedience without Controul, and all Things jumbling along in this wicked World, without the least Prospect of any good End ever to be answered. But if all Things, good and bad, are under the Government of infinite Wisdom; this affords a sure Prospect of a happy Issue. And under such a wise and perfect Government, we have the greatest Inducement to go on chearfully in the Ways of

* Job. 1.— † 2 Sam. XVI.

of our Duty; having always an implicit Faith in the ſupreme Ruler of the Univerſe.——Wherefore, the Truth of the Doctrine being thus plain and evident, I ſhall only attempt to ſhew,

I. WHAT we are to underſtand by God's *permitting* Sin. And,

II. THE *Wiſdom* of God in the Permiſſion of Sin. And then,

III. CONCLUDE with a practical Improvement.

I. WHAT are we to underſtand by God's *permitting* Sin?

1. NOT that He loves Sin, or that there is any Thing in the Nature of Sin that he approves of. For it is the abominable Thing, which his Soul hateth. When he viewed the Temper, Conduct and Deſign of Joſeph's Brethren, they each of them appeared perfectly odious in his Eyes. Their Envy and Malice he abhorred: their cruel and barbarous Deed he deteſted: their Deſign intimated in that Saying, "And then ſhall we ſee what will become of his "Dreams," * he perfectly diſapproved.

2. MUCH leſs are we to imagine, that God in permitting Sin deprives the Sinner of the Freedom of his Will. Joſeph's Brethren felt themſelves at Liberty; and in the whole Affair acted according to their own Inclinations,—juſt as they pleaſed.

3. GOD's permitting Sin conſiſts merely in not hindering of it. He ſaw, that Joſeph's Brethren, conſidering their Temper, and how they had their Brother out in the Field, and how that the Iſhmaelitiſh Merchants would ſoon come by, *&c. &c.* would certainly ſell him, unleſs he interpoſed to hinder it. And He could have hindered their ſelling, as eaſily as he hindered their murdering him. But he did not. He let them take their Courſe.

4. AND

* Gen. XXXVII. 20.

4. AND yet it is ſelf-evident, God never permits Sin, in the Character of an unconcerned Spectator, as not caring how Affairs go; but as having weighed all Circumſtances and Conſequences.—Therefore,

5. GOD never permits Sin, but only then, when, on the whole, all Things conſidered, he judges it beſt not to hinder it. And therefore,

6. AT whatever Time God forbears to interpoſe, to hinder the Commiſſion of any Act of Sin, he is not only juſtifiable in his Conduct, but even commendable and praiſe-worthy; becauſe he has choſen to act in the wiſeſt and beſt Manner.——But this leads me,

II. To ſhew the *Wiſdom* of God in the Permiſſion of Sin. And I will in the firſt Place begin with ſome Inſtances that are more plain and eaſy, and afterwards proceed to what is more intricate and difficult.

1ſt INSTANCE. And to begin with the Affair of of *Joſeph*——There needs little to be ſaid, to ſhew the manifold Wiſdom of God in it.——For it does not appear, that God could, as Things were circumſtanced, have taken a better Method for the Advancement of Joſeph to be Governor over all the Land of Egypt, than this. It was a Method ſuited to humble Joſeph, and wean him from the World, and bring him to an entire Reſignation to God, and Dependence upon, and Devotedneſs to him; and to prepare him for ſo high a Station, that in it he might conduct with all Fidelity to Pharaoh, and Humility, Goodneſs and Condeſcenſion to all around him; to the Honour of the God of Iſrael, and to the Reputation of true Religion, in the midſt of a People ſinking down faſt into Idolatry and Wickedneſs. It was a Method ſuited to give him a high Character in the Eyes of Pharaoh, and in the Eyes of all Egypt; as one dear to the great God, full of Wiſdom

Wisdom and Benevolence, and the fittest Man in Egypt to be so highly advanced and so far betrusted. From a poor Prisoner, he rose soon to so high a Character, and was so highly esteemed, as to become a FATHER to Pharaoh, and to all Egypt.

NOR does it appear, that, as Things were circumstanced, God could have taken a better Method than this, to provide for the Sustenance of Jacob's Family, of the Egyptians, and of the Nations throughout the Land of Canaan, thro' a Famine of seven Years Continuance. It was a Method suited to dispose Pharaoh, and all Egypt, to receive Jacob's Family kindly, and give them a hearty Welcome; as they were the Kindred of Joseph, their great Benefactor. It was a Method suited to humble Joseph's Brethren, and not only to bring them to Repentance for their Sin, but to a better Temper in general. And, as the selling of Joseph had been Matter of severe Trial to Jacob, who verily thought him dead, and expected to go down to the Grave sorrowing; so, in the Issue, the whole was suited abundantly to establish him in the Belief of the Being and Perfections of God, and of his Government of the World; and to give him an affecting, ravishing Sense of the Holiness, Wisdom, Goodness, Power and Faithfulness of the God of Abraham, his Father; and to confirm him in the Expectation of the Accomplishment of all God's Promises. And, in the mean Time, the Egyptians, and all the Nations inhabiting the Land of Canaan, were provided for with Food thro' a long and sore Famine, in a Manner suited to convince them of the Vanity of their Idols, and to bring them to an high Esteem of the God of the Hebrews, to whose kind Interposition their whole Support was owing. And thus God left not himself without Witness, in that dark and benighted Age of the World, when all the Nations were sinking

sinking fast down into Idolatry. For the whole Affair of the selling of Joseph, of the Conduct of his Mistress, of his unshaken Virtue, of his Imprisonment, of his interpreting the Dreams of his Fellow-prisoners, of his being bro't to Pharaoh's Court and interpreting his Dreams, of his Advancement, and of all his Conduct in that high Station, would naturally be noised abroad, not only throughout all Egypt, but also thro' all the Land of Canaan, from whence they daily came into Egypt for Bread; yea, the News of these Things would be apt to fly far and wide among all the Nations round about, to the Glory of the true God, and to the Honour of the true Religion, and to the Condemnation of an idolatrous World, who had forsaken the Lord Jehovah, and gone after Idols, that could neither see, nor hear, nor help.——All which good Ends, and many more, God had in View. Wherefore,

ALTHOUGH Joseph's Brethren acted a very wicked, cruel, God-provoking Part, in selling their Brother, notwithstanding all his Cries and Tears and the Anguish of his Soul, with an envious, malicious and impious Intention to prevent the Accomplishment of his divine Dreams, scoffingly saying among themselves, "And then we shall see what will become of his Dreams:" Yet, at the same Time, the God of Abraham acted truly like himself, a noble, a God-like Part, in letting them take their Course, with a Design to over-rule it as he did, to accomplish his Dreams; and that in a Way so much to his own Glory, and so much to the general Good.—— And how know we, but that the infinitely wise Governor of the Universe, when he permitted Angels and Man to fall, and Things in the intelligent System to take such a Course as they have, designed to over-rule the Whole so (according to a Plan he then had in View) as that in the Issue, God

should

should be more exalted, and the System more holy and happy, than if Sin and Misery had never entered?

But to proceed to a

2d. INSTANCE of the Wisdom of God in the Permission of Sin. Sometime after Joseph's Death, when the Children of Israel were greatly multiplied, there arose another King in Egypt, who knew not Joseph, nor paid the least Regard to his Memory; who, to enrich himself, attempted to bring the Israelites into a perpetual Bondage: and to that End set Task-Masters over them, who made them serve with Rigour. And, observing how exceedingly they multiplied, lest they should become too numerous and potent, and get themselves up out of a Land in which they were so abused, Pharaoh ordered the Midwives to kill their Male Children. But the Midwives proving unfaithful to his Injunctions, he laid his Commands on all his People in general, to take every Male Child, and cast them into the River.† All which was inhuman and barbarous to the last Degree.

As God had provided for the kind Entertainment of the Israelites by the Means of Joseph, whom he sent before them; so he could have provided for the Continuation of their Tranquillity, and restrained Pharaoh from this Tyrannical Conduct: But he chose to bring all these Distresses upon them, to wean them from the Idols and Pleasures of Egypt, to make them mindful of the promised Land, and to prepare them for their approaching Deliverance, and for their Wilderness-Travels. Therefore he wisely let Pharoah take his Course. For the Israelites were so kindly received in Joseph's Day, and so generously provided for, that they began after a While to forget the Land of Canaan, and feel themselves at Home, and fall in Love with the Customs and Idolatries of Egypt: And had it not been that Pha-

raoh

† Exod. I.

raoh attempted their Slavery, and treated them with ſo great Severity, there would have been Danger of their forgetting the God of their Fathers totally, and incorporating at length with the Egyptians. So that they greatly needed theſe Diſtreſſes, to make them willing to leave Egypt, and diſcern the Goodneſs of God in their Deliverance, and to awaken them and their Poſterity in Ages then to come, to a Senſe of their great Obligations to God, who brought them out of the Land of Egypt, and out of the Houſe of Bondage. *

BESIDES, at the ſame Time that God, by the cruel Tyranny of Pharaoh, was preparing the Iſraelites for their Deliverance, he alſo over-ruled his Barbarity to give an Occaſion of raiſing them up a Deliverer. For Pharaoh having ordered all the Male Children to be caſt into the River, Moſes's Mother, after having concealed him three Months, durſt keep him no longer, and ſo left him in an Ark of Bulruſhes, at the Side of the River, to the Mercy of the cruel Egyptians. Here Pharaoh's Daughter finds him — is touched with Compaſſion —— relieves the poor weeping Infant. — And now Moſes is called the "Son of Pharaoh's Daughter," and is educated in Pharaoh's Court, and inſtructed in all the Learning of Egypt; and finally, compleatly furniſhed for the glorious Work deſigned him. For Pharaoh ſeeking Moſes his Life, he was obliged to flee to the Land of Midian; where, in the ſolitary Life of a Shepherd, he ſpent 40 Years, until he became the meekeſt Man on Earth. And being thus endowed with an extraordinary Meaſure of human Learning and of divine Grace, God ſends him to deliver his People, who had been groaning under their ſore Bondage above an 100 Years. "O the Depth of the Knowledge and Wiſdom of God"!

* Exod. XX. 2.

THE very Methods, which Pharaoh, in his great Policy, takes to bind down the Hebrews in perpetual Slavery, God over-rules, to prepare them for, and to bring about their Deliverance. And while Pharaoh is hurried on in his Schemes, by his insatiable Avarice, and indulges to barbarous Cruelty, God, the infinitely wise Superintendent, calmly looks on, and lets him take his Course, conscious to his own Almightiness, and having his own glorious Plan all before him.—And how know we, but that this same infinitely wise Being, who has had the Government of the Universe in his Hands from the Beginning, had some noble, God-like Design in View, when he first permitted Sin and Misery to enter into the World which he had made?

But to proceed to a

3d. INSTANCE of the Wisdom of God in the Permission of Sin.

PHARAOH, full of a Sense of his own Greatness and Power, and of the Advantages which would accrue to him from the Labours of so many Servants, no sooner perceived Moses's Design, but he firmly resolved never to let Israel go. And when Moses assured him that the God of the Hebrews had appeared to him, he bid Defiance, not only to Moses, but to his God. "I know not the Lord, nor will I let Israel go." And the more Moses insisted upon their Release, the more his Pride and Covetousness wrought. For his Honour's sake he scorned to yield: and for his Interest's sake he many a Time resolved he never would.

FOR the supreme Monarch of the Universe, who does according to his Pleasure in the Armies of Heaven, and among the Inhabitants of the Earth, had looked on the bold, the daring, the haughty Wretch, and determined to leave him to his own Heart, to take his own Way, and do as he pleased; foreseeing

foreseeing just how he would conduct, and how the Affair would finally issue.

Go, says God to Moses, Go in to Pharaoh, and say, "Thus saith the Lord, let Israel go, that they may serve me: But I am sure, that the King of Egypt will not let you go: no, not by a mighty Hand. And I will stretch out my Hand, and smite Egypt with all my Wonders which I will do in the Midst thereof. And Pharaoh shall know, that I am the Lord: and the Egyptians shall know, that I am the Lord: Yea, my Name shall be declared throughout all the Earth. And thus do I order the Affair, that thou also mayst tell in the Ears of thy Son, and of thy Son's Son, what Things I have wrought in Egypt, and my Signs that I have done amongst them: that ye may know, that I am the LORD."

Moses goes, and delivers his Message to Pharaoh, saying, "Thus saith the Lord God of the Hebrews, Let my People go, that they may serve me." ——"Be gone to your Burdens", says Pharaoh to the Israelites. "And you Moses, do you hinder the People no longer from their Labour. And you Task-Masters, give them no Straw. For they are idle and wanton, and full of Notions: but I will tame these Hebrews, and make them know, they had better been content where they were."—So the Task-Masters with Rigour drive on the Israelites to perform their impossible Tasks—and beat them for Non-performance. They cry to Pharaoh, but cry in vain. "Ye are idle, ye are idle," says he, and full of Notions. Be gone! No Mercy shall be shewn you. I will make you repent your new Scheme, before I have done with you.—Thus Pharaoh storms, drives, sets up himself, hardens his Heart, resolved they shall never go.

WHEREUPON the God of Israel "wrought his "Signs in Egypt, and his Wonders in the Field of

" Zoan. He turned their Rivers into Blood ; and " their Floods, that they could not drink. He sent " divers Sorts of Flies among them, which devoured " them, and Frogs which destroyed them. He " gave also their Increase unto the Caterpillar, and " their Labour unto the Locust. He devoured " their Vines with Hail, and their Sycomore- " Trees with Frost. He gave up their Cattle " also to the Hail, and their Flocks to hot " Thunder-Bolts. He cast upon them the Fierce- " ness of his Anger, Wrath and Indignation, and " Trouble, by sending evil Angels among them. He " made a Way to his Anger ; he spared not their " Soul from Death : but gave their Life over to the " Pestilence. And smote all the First-born in " Egypt ; the chief of their Strength, in the Taber- " nacles of Ham. But made his own People go " forth like Sheep. He led them on safely : but " the Sea over-whelmed their Enemies."

PHARAOH's Design was, if possible, to prevent the Egress of the Hebrews ; that he might keep them for his Slaves : and that they, and all the World might know, that he was too potent and mighty a Prince to be subdued and conquered by the God of the Hebrews, to whom from the Beginning he had bid Defiance.

GOD's Designs were, by severe and cruel Bondage, to wean the Israelites from Egypt ; or at least, to force them, weaned, or not, to leave the Country, and be gone. Therefore he let Pharaoh loose, so unmercifully to oppress them. And as for Pharaoh, God let him lift up himself, harden his Heart, be as stout and haughty as he pleased : That as he was desirous, so he might have full Opportunity to try his Strength with the God of the Hebrews. That in the Issue, He might know, and the Egyptians might know, to their Shame and Confusion, — That he was the Lord,

Lord, the only true and living God, infinitely superiour to all their Idols. And in the mean Time he designed to give a lively Picture of himself, as of one infinitely too wise, great and powerful, for feeble Mortals to contend with; Resolved to vindicate his own Honour, at all Events; and revenge Affronts offered his Majesty; and carry on his own Designs in Spite of all Opposition. That the Israelites might see it, and know it for their Good; That all the Inhabitants of Canaan might be struck into a Panick: and indeed, that his Name might be declared throughout all the Earth. For he intended, that these his mighty Works should never be forgotten among Men, so long as the Sun and Moon should endure.

METHINKS, I behold Moses, on the other Side of the Red Sea, standing safe on the Shore, while the Carcases of the Egyptians, their broken Chariots, their drowned Horses, Part sunk to the Bottom, and Part floating upon the Sea, and scattered along the Coasts.——There He stands—He looks back—He surveys the gracious, the dreadful, the glorious Works of the God of Abraham, from the Day he saw the Burning Bush in the Wilderness of Horeb, and received his Commission to act in this grand Affair.—Pharaoh's haughty Temper, his impious, covetous, tyrannical, deceitful Conduct, all rise clear to his View——The astonishing Works of the God of Israel, His righteous Vengeance on his Foes, His self-moving Goodness and sovereign Grace to the Israelites, torn away from their Idols, and delivered out of the House of Bondage, all fill his astonished Soul; and the powerful Impressions penetrate the Center of his Heart.——He looks forward too to the promised Canaan, to which the Almighty had now undertaken to lead them, and imagines what Terror the News of all these Things would spread through

all the Land.——Inſpired with theſe Views, raviſhed with the Glory of the God of Iſrael, charmed with the Majeſty and Beauty of the divine Conduct, He ſpake, ſaying,

"I will ſing unto the LORD, for he hath triumphed glorioufly; the Horſe and his Rider hath he thrown into the Sea. The LORD is my Strength and Song, and he is become my Salvation: He is my GOD, and I will prepare him an Habitation; my Father's God, and I will exalt him.——Thy right Hand, O LORD, is become glorious in Power: thy right Hand, O LORD, hath daſhed in Pieces the Enemy. And in the Greatneſs of thine Excellency thou haſt overthrown them that roſe up againſt thee. Thou ſenteſt forth thy Wrath, which conſumed them as Stubble.——Who is like unto thee, O LORD, amongſt the Gods? Who is like unto thee, glorious in Holineſs, fearful in Praiſes, doing Wonders?——Thou in thy Mercy haſt led forth the People which thou haſt redeemed.——The People ſhall hear, and be afraid: Sorrow ſhall take hold on the Inhabitants of Paleſtine.——All the Inhabitants of Canaan ſhall melt away. Fear and Dread ſhall fall upon them; by the Greatneſs of thine Arm they ſhall be as ſtill as a Stone: till thy People paſs over, O LORD, till the People paſs over, which thou haſt purchaſed.——The LORD ſhall reign for ever and ever. *

AND while Moſes thus ſang the Praiſes of God, the ſupreme Monarch of the Univerſe, and celebrated his glorious Triumph over Pharaoh and all his Idol-Gods; ſo raviſhed with the Wiſdom, Glory and Beauty of the divine Conduct, as to be even more attached to his Honour and Intereſt than ever, and even the better prepared to conduct with that ſteady

* Exod. XV.

steady Fidelity thro' all the future Trials of his Life, always true to God, and heartily concerned to see the Honour of his great Name secured; I say, while Moses was full of these divine Views and Tempers on this grand Occasion, all Egypt were in profound Darkness: and these Dispensations, so bright and glorious in the View of Moses, to them appeared gloomy as Death.

AND if these Dispensations of divine Providence, which to the Egyptians appeared so dark and gloomy, to Moses appeared so full of divine Wisdom, Beauty and Glory; how know we, but that God's whole Plan of Government, how dark soever it may now appear to a revolted World, under God's Displeasure, may to Saints and Angels, after the general Judgment, appear perfect in Wisdom, Glory and Beauty, and be Matter of their eternal Delight and Praise. But to proceed,

4. To other Instances of the Wisdom of God in the Permission of Sin.

THE Israelites, having thus escaped the Hands of Pharaoh, and recovered their Liberty, had it been left to them to direct their March, and point out their future Fortunes, they might perhaps have thought it best, that being led on directly to the Land of Canaan, they should by the mighty Power of God have been put into an immediate Possession, to be followed with Scenes of Feasting, Joy and Mirth, never to be interrupted.

BUT God, who knew their Hearts, who knew how deeply tainted they were with the Idolatries and Manners of Egypt, and how high a Relish they had to sensual Pleasures, might easily foresee how all Sense of the true God would soon be lost in the midst of such Prosperity, and they become no better than the ejected Canaantes. Besides, he saw that in almost every Respect they were as yet unprepared to enter

the promiſed Land. And alſo he deſigned them for our Enſamples, and his Diſpenſations towards them for the Inſtruction of Mankind to the End of the World.——Wherefore let us attend to the divine Conduct, and behold the manifold Wiſdom of God.

HE had torn them away from their Idols, their Leeks, their Onions, and their Fleſh-Pots; to which they were ſtupidly attached. He had ſent to them by Moſes, and commanded, "that they ſhould caſt "away every Man the Abominations of his Eyes, "and not defile themſelves with the Idols of Egypt "any more; for that he, himſelf, was the LORD "their GOD."——But altho' the Thunder of divine Wrath, ſo dreadfully roared throughout all the Land of Egypt among the Egyptians, and God was now in a miraculous Manner working their Deliverance; yet, even now they rebelled againſt the Lord, and would not hearken unto him. "They did not "every Man caſt away the Abominations of their "Eyes, neither did they forſake the Idols of Egypt." Wherefore God ſaid, "I will pour out my "Fury upon them, to accompliſh mine Anger "upon them in the midſt of the Land of Egypt."*

But

* If when God met with ſuch infinite Provocations at the Hands of the Hebrews, he could yet find in his Heart to proſecute his Deſign, and accompliſh his Promiſe to Abraham, that to his Seed he would give the Land of Canaan; we cannot have the leaſt Reaſon to doubt, but that, notwithſtanding all the preſent Wickedneſs of his profeſſing People in the World, whereby he is infinitely provoked to reſign all Chriſtendom to Deſtruction, he will yet proſecute his Deſigns, and accompliſh all his Promiſes—— "Give to his Son the Heathen for his Inheritance, and "the utmoſt Parts of the Earth for his Poſſeſſion; and bring every People, Nation, Language and Tongue to ſerve him: and Satan ſhall be bound, and Chriſt ſhall reign on Earth, for a Thouſand Years."—No Obſtacles, no

Diſcourage-

But then God conſidered what the Egyptians would ſay to ſuch a Diſpenſation of Providence, and how it would be miſinterpreted thro' all Nations and Ages—— "Wherefore he wrought for his great "Name's ſake, that it might not be polluted before "the Heathen, among whom they were, and in "whoſe Sight, God intended to make himſelf "known to the Iſraelites, by bringing them out of "the Land of Egypt." † And therefore inſtead of the Deſtruction they deſerved from his Hands for their ſtupid Attachment to the Egyptian Abominations, God let looſe Pharaoh to increaſe their Burdens, to make their Bondage abſolutely intolerable, that he might force them from their Idols, and drive them out of Egypt.——And to bring them ſtill more to their Senſes, God let Pharaoh looſe to purſue them with Chariots, and Horſe-men, and a great Army; and contrived that he ſhould overtake them, ſhut in among the Mountains, unable to make their Eſcape; that he might have Opportunity to let Iſrael ſee his mighty Power, in dividing the Sea, and make them feel their Dependance upon, and Obligations to him: and that having led them thro' the Sea, he might have them in a barren Wilderneſs, where there was neither Bread, nor Fleſh, nor Water, as the fitteſt Scene for thoſe Tranſactions and grand Events, belonging to the infinitely wiſe Plan, which God had laid out. ISRAEL.

Diſcouragements, no Provocations, no Difficulties, of whatever Kind, or however great, can hinder God from the Accompliſhment of the glorious Deſigns of his Grace.—He redeemed Iſrael out of Egypt, altho' he ſaw what they were then, and what they would be in all future Times.—Yea, he has given his SON, and that to the Death of the Croſs, in order to carry on his Deſigns.—And what will not GOD ALMIGHTY then do?——ALMIGHTINESS, ſo INFINITELY engaged, cannot, and will not be fruſtrated.

† Ezek. XX. 5,—9.

ISRAEL had been in Egypt 215 Years.* And the latter Part of the Time, for above an Hundred Years, in a State of Bondage & Slavery.—They had almoſt forgotten the true God, and the true Religion, were habituated to the Idolatry and Manners of Egypt, well pleaſed with the Country; and, but for their Oppreſſions, would never have entertained any Tho'ts of leaving it. Yea, notwithſtanding their ſevere Bondage, were hardly prevailed upon to hearken to Moſes, to whom they ſaid, "Let us alone, that we may ſerve the Egyptians," as they afterwards upbraided him in their Diſtreſs at the Red-Sea.†—And they were of ſo mean and daſtardly a Spirit, as to be unfit to march againſt their Enemies.——God, who knew their Temper, judged, that if he had led them from Egypt ſtrait to Canaan, which was not an hundred Miles diſtant, the Approach of their Enemies, prepared for War, would have frighted them back again to Egypt.‡—Yea, ſuch was their Attachment

* From the Covenant with Abram, to the giving of the Law, was (as St. Paul aſſerts, Gal. III. 17.) 430 Years. And this will give Light to Gen. XV. 13. and to Exod. XII. 40, 41. For the Law was given ſoon after they came out of Egypt.

JOSEPH was 17 Years old, when he was ſold, and it is ſuppoſed he was ſoon impriſoned, perhaps the very ſame Year, and ſo that he lay in Priſon about 13 Years: for he was 30 at his Advancement. After which, in about 9 Years, Jacob and all his Family came down into Egypt. After which, Joſeph lived 71 Years. And ſo in all, was in the greateſt Honour 80 Years, to counterbalance 13 Years of Sorrow.——Iſrael came out of Egypt 144 Years after Joſeph's Death; the greateſt Part of which Time they were under Oppreſſion.—Moſes was born 64 Years after Joſeph's Death—ſpent 40 in Pharaoh's Court—and 40 in the Land of Midian.

† Exod. XIV. 12. ‡ Exod. XIII. 17.

ment to Egypt, their Coldness to Canaan, their Cowardice, and their stupid Infidelity, even after a Year's Discipline in the Wilderness, and notwithstanding their solemn Profession and Promises to God at Mount Sinai, that upon the ill Tidings of the Spies, they were for stoning Caleb and Joshua, and making to themselves a Captain, and returning to their beloved Egypt.

Now such were the People God had to manage, so every Way distempered, that they needed all their old Notions, Tastes and Tempers to be eradicated; and to have their Minds wholly framed a-new, in order to be fit Inhabitants for the holy Land.

THEY must be thoroughly weaned from Egypt, from their Idolatry and their Manners; and be bro't to know the true God, and to be sensible of his infinite Abhorrence of their Tempers and Ways; and have their Hearts effectually broken under a Sense of their Vileness: that they might loath themselves, and turn to the Lord, and love him, and be prepared to understand and fall in with the Religion he gave them from Mount Sinai, that they might be an holy People to the Lord, a Kingdom of Priests, and an holy Nation; that they might be to his Praise and Glory, in the midst of an idolatrous benighted World; and that they might receive the promised Land, not as a Reward of their Righteousness,—for they were a stiff-necked People; but as a mere free Gift from the God of Abraham, their Father; and feel themselves, by the Means, laid under the strongest Obligations to love him, and fear him, and walk in all his Ways, and keep all his Commands: And at the same Time, be so inured to Hardship, and so thoro'ly confirmed in the Belief of the Being and Perfections of God, as that, in an entire Dependance on the Lord, they might march into the promised Land, and behave like valiant Soldiers, and execute God's

God's Vengeance on those idolatrous Nations, whom he had doomed to Destruction; break down their Altars, cut down their Groves, burn their Gods, and extirpate both them and their Religion from off the Face of the Earth.

AND what Method, better suited to answer these noble Ends, could possibly have been devised, than that which the Lord their God took, for the Space of forty Years in the Wilderness: Wherein he humbled them, and proved them, and tried them, that it might appear what was in their Hearts: and he left them to hunger and to thirst, and to murmur and rebel, and to commit Idolatry, that their Hearts might be turned inside out before their Eyes: and by a long Course of Discipline, he trained them up to a Sense of his Being, and Perfections, and Government, and to feel their Dependance on him, and Obligations to him, and by Experience learn the dreadful Nature of Sin. He fed them with Angels Food, and gave them Water out of the flinty Rock: he led them by Day in a Cloud, and in the Night by a Pillar of Fire: but when they rebelled, the Earth opened its Mouth, and swallowed up Hundreds, and the Plague swept away Thousands at a Stroke; yea, at last, the whole Congregation of Six Hundred Thousand were doomed to fall in the Wilderness.

NOTHING impresses the Heart of a human Creature like FACTS. Nor could any Series of Facts have been better contrived than these, to reach their Hearts, and make them feel what they were in the Sight of infinite Holiness, and to bring them to fear the glorious and fearful Name of the Lord their God.

AT the Side of the Red-Sea, they were, to Appearance, full of Love to God, and there they sang his Praise: And had Things gone to their Minds, they might never have suspected the secret Hypocrisy

of

of their Hearts.—But as God had contrived the Plan, in three Days their religious Affections were gone, and their corrupt Hearts, like the troubled Sea, cast up Mire and Dirt.—God knew what they were before: and it was wise in him, to take this Method, to bring them to know it too.

AT Mount Sinai, they were again deeply affected, when the Law was given, in a Manner so solemn and divine: and there they promised, that whatsoever the Lord their God should command them, that would they do.——But in less than forty Days, they made them a Calf after the Manner of Egypt, and eat and drank, and rose up to Play, after the Egyptian Mode.—God knew before, that all this was in their Hearts: and now he wisely permitted it to break out, that they might know it too: and that he might have a good Opportunity to let them see how exceedingly he hated their Ways.——He had tried WORDS, but these would not do. He had used the plainest and strongest Expressions in the first and second Commandments, but they were not effectual.—Now he proceeds to FACTS—Three Thousand are slain by the Sword at his Command, to let the whole Congregation KNOW how detestable their Conduct was in his Eyes. *

AND so again, while the Tabernacle was building, and at the Time of its Dedication, they appeared very forward in Religion, as tho' they loved God, and loved his Worship, and were determined for the future to be an obedient People. And this lasted for about a Year. And doubtless they thought themselves sincere, and always might have thought so, had no new Trials come on.——But no sooner did the Spies return from viewing the Land of Canaan, and bring ill Tidings, but their old Egyptian Temper all revived.——Now Joshua and Caleb

* Exod. XXXII. 28.

must be stoned for pleading the Lord's Cause, and a new Captain chosen to conduct them back to Egypt, which they left with Reluctance about a Year ago: willing, it seems, for ever to part with their God, their Tabernacle, and their Religion; and turn back to the Idols, and Manners, and Leeks, and Onions of Egypt; and make their Peace with the Egyptians as they could. And had not the ALMIGHTY suddenly interposed, no doubt, dreadful Deeds would soon have been done.—God knew, all this was in their Hearts before: and now he wisely permitted it to break out, that they might know it too: and that by his future Conduct toward that People, he might let them know that he was the Lord, and fill the whole Earth with his Glory. *

AND while that Generation was doomed to wander Forty Years in the Wilderness, and their Carcases there to fall, as the just Punishment of their Crimes; their Posterity, by the Means, had their Egyptian Notions and Tempers eradicated, and were trained up in the Knowledge of God, and of the true Religion; and prepared to enter, conquer, and possess the holy Land. Nor could they ever, to their dying Day, forget the Works of the Lord their God, which they had seen in Egypt, at the Red Sea, in the Wilderness, &c. Nor could they have had stronger Inducements to tell these Things to their Sons, and Sons Sons. Nor could a better Method have been taken to lay a lasting Foundation for a firm Belief, and steady Practice of the true Religion.

IT was most for the Honour of God, and most for the Interest of Religion; and so really for the best Good of the Israelites, that they should be thus tried, left to act out their Hearts, and then punished, subdued, humbled & bro't into Subjection to the divine Authority, before they entered into Possession of the promised

* Num. XIV.

promiſed Land; altho' it coſt them Six Hundred Thouſand Lives, and many a dreadful Day.——. For, to what Purpoſe had it been, for God to have brought them ſtraight from Egypt, with all their Egyptian Notions and Tempers, into the holy Land, there to have polluted it, and to have diſhonoured him with their Abominations?*

Besides, from the Murmurings and Rebellions of the Iſraelites in the Wilderneſs, there was the fulleſt Demonſtration of the Divinity of the Jewiſh Religion. For, had not Moſes been ſent of God, and ſupported too by the Interpoſition of Almighty Power, it had been impoſſible he ſhould have accompliſhed the Deſign.——They would ſurely have deſerted him, and returned to Egypt again.——Nor could the Children of Iſrael, how degenerate ſoever they were, and how apt ſoever to fall into Idolatry, in after-Ages, ever once ſcruple whether Moſes were indeed ſent of God, after ſuch a Scene of Wonders for forty Years together. Nor does it appear, that the divine Legation of Moſes was ever called in Queſtion by that People.

* If it was wiſe in God ſo to order, that the Iſraelites ſhould be oppreſſed above an hundred Years before their Deliverance, and then paſs thro' ſuch great Trials forty Years more, before their Entrance into the holy Land; how know we but it may be wiſe, that the Chriſtian Church in general, and we in New-England in particular, ſhould paſs thro' very dark and trying Times, for a long Seaſon, before God begins to work Deliverance, in that remarkable Manner, which may be expected at the uſhering in of the glorious Days. To be ſure, there ſeems to be a Foundation laid for great Diſtreſſes, and of long Continuance, for our ſinful Land. Better ſo, than to be left to ſleep on, ſecure in Sin. Nothing ſo dreadful, as to be given up to carnal Security, and ſuffered to go on in Wickedneſs and Impiety.

AND whenever they read over the Law of Moſes, together with the Hiſtory interſperſed in thoſe ſacred Books, they might not only learn the Nature of God and Man, and ſee God's Right to command, their Obligations to obey, and the great Evil of Sin, from the Law of Moſes, as being therein held forth; but might behold all theſe exemplified, in a moſt ſtriking Manner, in a Series of FACTS.——Let them but view the divine Conduct in Egypt, at the Red-Sea, in the Wilderneſs, &c. and it would give them a moſt lively Picture of the the DIVINE NATURE: for here they had the HISTORY of the DEITY.——And let them view the Conduct of the Iſraelites, from firſt to laſt, and it would give them a moſt lively Picture of human Nature: for here they had it acted out to the Life.—And God's Right to command, their Obligations to obey, and the great Evil of Sin are ſet in the ſtrongeſt Light.—Nor were the Advantages of theſe Tranſactions confined to thoſe Ages: for all theſe Things happened and were written for our Inſtruction, on whom the Ends of the World are come. God is ſtill the ſame: and ſo is human Nature too. For as Face anſwers to Face in a Glaſs, ſo does the Heart of Man to Man.——O the Depth of the Wiſdom and Knowledge of God! Of whom, and by whom, and to whom are all Things; to whom belongs Glory for ever!——And how know we but that the grand Affairs of the Univerſe are all conducted as wiſely, as were theſe now in our View.

To Conclude, let theſe four Remarks be well attended to, and remembred.

1. THAT in all theſe Inſtances of God's permitting Sin, he had a View to the Manifeſtation of Himſelf. They gave him Opportunities to act out his Heart; and ſo to ſhew what he was, and how he ſtood affected: and he intended by his Conduct

to ſet himſelf, i. e. all his Perfections, in a full, clear, ſtrong Point of Light: that it might be known that he was the LORD, and that the whole Earth might be filled with his Glory.

2. AND he intended to let his Creatures give a true Specimen of themſelves: that it might be known what was in their Hearts. But

3. THE Advantages of Acquaintance with God and ourſelves are innumerable.——We can be neither humble, holy, nor happy without it.——So that

4. IT may eaſily be ſeen, how that God in the Permiſſion of Sin, may deſign to advance his own Glory, and the Good of his Creatures.——And that this was really God's Deſign, in the Inſtances which have been under Conſideration, is manifeſt from the five Books of Moſes, in which the Hiſtory of theſe Things is recorded at large.——Particularly, I deſire the VIIIth, IXth, Xth, & XIth Chapters of Deuteronomy may be read in this View.

The WISDOM of God in the Permiſſion of SIN.

SERMON II.

GENESIS L. 20.

——*YE thought Evil againſt Me; but God meant it unto Good*——

WISDOM conſiſts in chooſing the beſt End, and contriving the moſt proper Means to attain it.

THE MESSIAH had been promiſed to our firſt Parents, about Two Thouſand Years ago; and the appointed Time of his Advent was approaching: But the World were greatly unprepared for ſuch an Event. They did not know, that they were in a fallen State, and that they needed a Redeemer and a Sanctifier. They neither knew God, nor themſelves —what they were—nor what they ought to be—— nor what they needed to bring them right: and were ſinking by ſwift Degrees into ſtill groſſer Ignorance, and the moſt ſtupid Idolatry. And had God ſuffered them all to have taken their own Courſe, till the MESSIAH's Birth, Ignorance and Depravity would

would have risen to such a Height, as to have rendered Mankind wholly unprepared for the Gospel-Dispensation.

WHEREFORE God must interpose, and some Method must be taken to check the universal Spread of Idolatry and Ignorance, and to revive the Knowledge of the true God, and of the Law of Nature; and to make Mankind sensible of their Depravity, of their Guilt and Ill-desert, and Need of a Redeemer and Sanctifier; and so prepare the Way for the Coming of Christ, and the Erection of his spiritual Kingdom.

WITH these Views, about two Thousand Years before the Birth of the MESSIAH, God called Abram from Ur of the Chaldees, and separated him from an idolatrous World, and chose his Seed to be his People; that in his Dealings with them, he might bear a publick Testimony against Idolatry, in the Sight of all the Nations of the Earth; and at the same Time exhibit a most exact Picture of himself in his Conduct, and set his Character in the most glaring, striking, affecting Light; that, stupid as they were, they should be, as it were, forced to see and understand what he was. And, at the same Time, he would let them know, what they ought to be, and the Greatness of their Obligations to the Deity; and turn their Hearts inside out, that they might see themselves, and discern their true Character, and so feel their Need of a Redeemer and Sanctifier. And then he would exhibit in Types and Shadows, i. e. by Sacrifices of Atonement, and Purifications for Uncleanness, the Nature of the Atonement of Christ, and of the sanctifying Influences of the holy Spirit. And thus prepare the Way for the Coming of the Messiah, and the Erection of his spiritual Kingdom in the World: and that not only among Jews, thus trained up, but also among Gentiles, who, in after Ages,

should be let into these divine Dispensations and Designs, and reap the Benefit of all these preparatory and introductory Steps.

HAD Joseph not been sold, and had Jacob continued to live in the Land of Canaan, with his Family, and had his Posterity there gradually increased, until they had filled all the Land (the Canaanites mean while dying off, as the Indians have done in *N. E.* these 130 Years past) I say, had his Posterity gradually increased until they had filled all the Land, without any uncommon Changes, or any extraordinary Interpositions of Providence, none of the forementioned Ends could have been answered. Yea, there would apparently have been the utmost Danger, that the Israelites would have been no better than the Canaanites had been: and God might foresee, that this would infallibly be the Case; and so all his Ends in separating Abraham and his Seed wholly frustrated.

ON the other Hand, if Joseph is sold; if Jacob and his Family move down and settle in Egypt, the chief Seat of Idolatry; a proper Scene opens in the View of infinite Wisdom, where all his Wonders might be wrought: and fit Opportunities, he foresaw, would present, for the Accomplishment of all the Purposes of his Heart.

NOTHING further was needful, than for God not to hinder Joseph's Brethren, and they would sell him—Not to hinder Potiphar's Wife, and she would get him cast into Prison; where he might be prepared for, and from whence he might be raised to, the highest Advancement, by which many noble and God-like Ends might be answered.——Nothing further was needful, than for God not to hinder the King of Egypt, and he would oppress the Israelites, till they were prepared for their Egression.—Not to hinder Pharaoh, and he would harden his Heart,

and

and refuse to let them go, until Egypt was filled with the wonderful Works of God.—Yea, if God hindered him not, into the Red-Sea he would drive head-long, hurried on by the Corruptions of his Heart; that, in his Destruction, God might shew his Power, and cause his Name to be declared thro' out all the Earth.——And now the Hebrews, rescued from Pharaoh's destroying Sword by almighty Power, would be in the Hands of God their Deliverer, to be disciplined, to be humbled and proved and tried, that it might be known what was in their Hearts; and that, finally, they might be prepared to enter the promised Land, and execute the Vengeance of the ALMIGHTY on those idolatrous Nations; and be God's peculiar People, till the MESSIAH's Coming, and the Erection of his spiritual Kingdom.—I say, be God's peculiar People, to receive the LAW from Sinai, to be under God's immediate Government, to keep the holy Oracles, to preserve the Predictions of the Messiah, and to answer many other noble and divine Ends God had in View.

A PLAN, in which so much Sin was to be permitted, and so much Misery endured, might, by short-sighted Mortals, have been thought dishonourable to God, and unhappy for the Israelites; but under the Management of infinite Wisdom, it proves the direct contrary. Yea, for aught that appears, God could not have taken a better Method, as Things then stood in the World, to make himself known, and get Honour to his great Name, and make the Israelites sensible of their Dependance upon him, and Obligations to him, and engage them to perpetual Obedience, than that. As it is written, "What could have been done more to "my Vineyard, that I have not done in it?"

YEA, It was a Plan not only suited to be beneficial in that Age; but in all succeeding Generations:

and that in more Instances than can well be enumerated. Particularly, it has furnished us with a HISTORY of the DEITY, and with a HISTORY of HUMAN NATURE: Such a History as is indeed of infinite Value. For every Thing is exemplified in FACTS; by which, the Mind is instructed more clearly, and the Heart reached more effectually, than in any other Way.

THE invisible God, whom no Eye hath seen, or can see, and of whom it is so difficult for us in this benighted World to frame just Conceptions, is brought upon the Stage; and he acts out his Nature before our Eyes, with a Design to set his true Character in a clear and striking Light.——Here we see, as it were with our Eyes, how he foreordained whatsoever came to pass; how he laid out the whole Plan, from the selling of Joseph to his Advancement, and to Jacob's going down into Egypt; and how they should be oppressed and bro't into Bondage, and how they should finally be brought forth, and led in the Wilderness, and prepared for Canaan, &c. And we see the Wisdom, Glory and Beauty of his Plan.——Here we see what a Regard he has for his own Honour, and how his whole Plan is suited to set him in that infinitely honourable Point of Light, which so exactly becomes him, as he is by Nature God, and by original Right the supreme Lord and Governor of the World.—Here we see his Resolution to maintain his Authority, in his Conduct to Pharaoh, that haughty Rebel, who bid him Defiance, and stoutly refused to let Israel go.——Here we see his sovereign Grace and self-moving Goodness, as it were, forcing the infatuated Israelites from their beloved Egypt, and their beloved Idols: and when he had the highest Provocations to destroy them, how he wrought for his great Name's sake, until he had prepared them

them for, and brought them in to the promised Land.——And how, in the mean Time, he set his Hatred of their Sins in the clearest and strongest Light; commanding the Earth to open its Mouth and swallow up Hundreds, and the Plague to go forth, from Time to Time, and cut down Thousands in a Moment, yea, dooming that whole Generation to wander and fall in the Wilderness for their Crimes, reserving the good Land for their Posterity.—— Here we see him exercising his Sovereignty, when the Israelites and the Egyptians both deserved Destruction, and to have been buried alive in the Red-Sea together; he had Mercy on whom he would have Mercy, and whom he would, he gave up to Hardness of Heart, and to Ruin. And after the Israelites had been in the Wilderness above a Year, and had sufficiently shewn what they were, and carried their Provocations so high, that divine Justice said, "Let me alone, that I may destroy them in a "Moment," still he wrought for his great Name's sake: and had Mercy on them, because he would have Mercy on them, and was gracious to them, because he would be gracious to them: i. e. from his self-moving Goodness and sovereign Grace.*—

And

* *Exod.* XXXIII. 29. *Num.* XIV. From these Dispensations, which were acknowledged to be right by the Jews, St. *Paul* was able to justify the divine Conduct in his Day, in casting off the Jews, and calling the Gentiles. *Rom.* IX. "If God had a Right to give up Pharaoh to "Hardness of Heart and to Destruction in the Days of "old, as ye Jews own; why not you now?—If the "Exercises of God's Grace were sovereign then, to "your Fathers, who deserved, God being Judge, to be all "consumed in a Moment; why may not the Gentiles, "notwithstanding their ill Deserts, be now called and "saved, from the same sovereign Grace? God used to "act as a Sovereign; why may he not still? And if in

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And by all, we see, that not any Thing, whatsoever, is able to frustrate God's Designs, or hinder the faithful Accomplishment of his Promise to Abraham, That to his Seed he would give the Land of Canaan.

AT the same Time, we have HUMAN NATURE brought upon the Stage, and Experiments made upon the Heart of Man, in a great Variety; whereby its true Temper is as certainly determined, as was ever the Nature of any Thing in the natural World, by the great Sir *Isaac Newton.* *

So

"one Instance; why not in another, altogether similar?" Nor could the Jew fairly evade the Force of this Reasoning.—And if we should only suppose, that Pharaoh, after he was drowned, went to Hell, and that the unbelieving Jews of that Age, who were cast off by God for their Infidelity, were eternally lost, then we have the Doctrine of Reprobation, which has been so much misunderstood and misrepresented, exemplified in FACTS. For, whatsoever God does in Time, That, He from all Eternity, intended to do.—Yea, and that, which is right for God to do in Time, He had a Right from Eternity to determine to do.—Yea, if God, in FACT, governs the World WELL, then he did WELL to determine to govern it as he does.—Reasonable Creatures would never object against God's laying out a universal Plan, if the Plan did but suit their Taste.

* OBJECTION. "BUT it can never be supposed, that the "true Character of human Nature, in general, can be "decided from the perverse Conduct of the Israelites in "the Wilderness."

ANSWER. WAS not their Conduct, then, of a Piece with the general Tenor of their Conduct, from that Time and forward, for fifteen Hundred Years, when they slew their Prophets, yea, and crucified the Son of God? Acts VII. 51, 52.

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So that, on these, as well as many other Accounts, that Plan was not only for the Honour of God, and Good of the Israelites; but for the Benefit of Mankind in all succeeding Generations.

AND how know we but that it was designed by the infinitely wise God, as a little Kind of PICTURE, in which we might see, in Miniature, the Nature of God's Government of the whole moral System, and the Reasons of his permitting Sin and Misery to enter into the World he had made?——Which brings me—

SECONDLY, After having viewed the Wisdom of God in the Permission of Sin, in various plain Instances, to proceed humbly to search into the Wisdom of God, in EVER permitting Sin and Misery to enter into World. And

1. As all God's Works are uniform, so we may justly argue from the Wisdom and Beauty of particular Parts, to the Wisdom and Beauty of the Whole. As God's Nature is always the same, and as he always

OBJ. "IF it was; yet it is not to be supposed, that "every Nation would have been so wicked and perverse, "as the Jews were, if under like Circumstances."

ANS. BUT it is the common Character of an apostate fallen World, that they are "dead in Sin." Eph. II. 1, 2, 3.

OBJ. "THESE Words were spoken of the Gentiles, and "so are nothing to the Purpose."

ANS. SEEING then (according to these Men) the Character of Mankind can't be learn'd from what is said in the old or new Testament, of Jews, or Gentiles; but we, in this Age and Nation, are quite another Kind of Creatures, so benevolent, so good, so virtuous; methinks the Old and New Testaments are Writings not suited to our Case; as they are not adapted to Men of our Character. And perhaps this is one Reason, these ancient Writings are in so low Credit with many in the British Dominions:——and Plato begins to be more admired than Moses, or St. Paul.

ways acts like himself; so therefore his Works are always harmonious and consistent. So that if we can see the Wisdom of God in the Permission of Sin in some Instances, we may justly argue to his Wisdom in his whole grand Scheme.—Yea, and from the Wisdom, Glory and Beauty of particular Parts, we may be rationally convinced, that God's grand Scheme is perfect in Wisdom, Glory and Beauty, altho' it be so incomprehensibly great, as to confound our Understandings. If we certainly know that God's Works are all uniform, and if there is one small Part that we can understand and comprehend, and if we see this is perfectly wise, we may be assured the whole is so too; altho' when we try to look into it, we feel our Minds quite overwhelmed with its incomprehensible Greatness.

2. YEA, were there no particular Instance, in which we could see the Wisdom of God in the Permission of Sin, yet from the Perfections of the divine Nature alone, we have such full Evidence, that He must always act in the wisest and best Manner, as that we ought not in the least to doubt it.

IN the Days of Eternity, long before the Foundation of the World, this System now in Existence, and this Plan which now takes place, and all other possible Systems, and all other possible Plans, more in Number perhaps than the very Sands on the Sea Shore, all equally lay open to the divine View, and one as easy to Almightiness as another. He had his Choice: He had none to please, but himself: besides him there was no Being: He had a perfectly good Taste, and nothing to bias his Judgment, and was infinite in Wisdom: this he chose: and this, of all possible Systems, therefore, was the best, infinite Wisdom and perfect Rectitude being Judges. If therefore the Whole were as absolutely incomprehensible by us, as it is by Children of Four Years old,

old, yet we ought firmly to believe the whole to be perfect in Wisdom, Glory and Beauty.

3. BUT if all God's Works are uniform, as has been said, we may not only argue from the Wisdom of particular Parts, to the Wisdom of the Whole; but also from the special Nature of particular Parts, to the special Nature of the Whole; and so from a right Idea of particular Parts, which we are able to comprehend, we may have some right Conceptions of the Whole, altho' the Whole is too great for our Comprehension. And so here is a Clue, which will lead us into a right View of the true Nature of the whole moral System, and help us, at least, to some partial View of the Wisdom, Glory and Beauty of the Whole.

4. AND indeed, it seems to have been God's Design, in this State of Instruction and Discipline, where we first come into Existence, and, from small Beginnings, are to grow up to a more full Knowledge of God and Insight into his moral Government of the World, the Contemplation of which will afford the most intense Delight to all holy Beings, throughout eternal Ages; I say, it seems to have been God's Design, to suit Things to the present Weakness of our Capacities, by representing the general Nature of the whole moral System in some select Parts of it, giving us a Kind of a PICTURE of the Whole in Miniature, to lead us to some right Notions of the Nature of the Whole.

'TIS certain, that, as all God's Works are uniform, amidst all their infinite Variety, so it has been his Method, in his lesser Works in the moral World, designedly to give a faint Image of his greater, and hereby prepare the Way for their being the more easily understood. So the Redemption of Israel out of Egypt was designed as a Shadow of our spiritual Redemption by Christ: and the Deliverance of the

Jews out of Babylon was designed as a Resemblance of the Deliverance of the Christian Church out of mystical Babylon. And there are almost innumerable Instances of the like Nature in Scripture. Yea, the whole Jewish Dispensation was evidently designed to be emblematical. So indeed was every Thing in the natural World, from which Metaphors and Allusions are constantly brought by Christ and his Apostles, to represent and illustrate spiritual and divine Things; as well as from the Jewish Dispensation.

AND indeed this was Workman-like, and becoming the infinite Wisdom of the great CONTRIVER and FORMER of all Things, to whom all his Works were known from the Beginning, and who designed this lower World, as the grand Stage of Action for moral Agents, so to order Things in all his Works, and in all his Dispensations, as that one Thing shou'd give Light to another; Things in the natural World, to Things in the moral; Things in the Jewish Dispensation, to Things in the Christian.

IT would, therefore, be perfectly analogous to the rest of God's Works, if he had designed some eminent Parts of his grand Plan of moral Government to contain in Miniature the Nature of the Whole, and contrived them to represent, and suited them to point out to us the Wisdom and Beauty of his grand and glorious Sheme, which is too large for our present Comprehension; and too difficult to be understood, but by the Help of little Pictures, where the Whole is contained in Miniature.

5. YEA, We may venture to affirm, that of Necessity it must be the Case, that the Nature of the Parts will certainly shew the Nature of the Whole, in a moral System, under the Government of him who is the same Yesterday, to Day, and forever. For, while he constantly acts like himself, his whole Conduct

Conduct will be of a Piece, always like itself; and so one Part of it will illustrate the Nature of another: and so from the Knowledge of the Nature of various Parts, we may certainly argue to the Nature of the Whole. As, let us but diligently observe a wise and good Man, who is uniform and steady in his Ways; and from repeated Instances of his Conduct, we shall enter into the Knowledge of his Temper in general, and perceive the Views and Designs which govern him. So let us but attend to the divine Conduct, as recorded in that Book, which may justly be denominated the History of the Deity, and enter into his Views and Designs, in particular Instances of his Conduct, as there intimated; and we may with sufficient Certainty determine his moral Character, and the general Nature and Design of his whole Plan.

SHEW me, therefore, his Views and Designs in suffering Joseph to be sold, Israel to be oppressed, Pharaoh to harden his Heart, Israel to murmur and rebel and fall in the Wilderness; and let me into the Wisdom of his Conduct, in these particular Parts of his grand Scheme; and then assure me that the whole System is governed by the same infinitely wise Being; and how can I doubt the Wisdom of the Whole, while I behold the Wisdom of these particular Parts? Or how can I be at a Loss for the general Nature of the Whole, while I behold the Nature of these particular Parts, and firmly believe that God always acts like himself, and keeps up a constant Uniformity thro' all the infinite Varieties of Cases and Circumstances, that ever occur in his moral Government of the World?

6. IF, therefore, the Plan which infinite Wisdom contrived to bring Jacob's Family into Egypt, and from thence thro' the Red-Sea and Wilderness into Canaan, in which so much Sin was permitted, and so much Misery endured, was, all Things considered,

the wiſeſt and beſt; as being ſo exactly ſuited to ſet all the Perfections of God in the fulleſt and ſtrongeſt Point of Light, and at the ſame Time to unmaſk their Hearts, and ſet their abſolute Dependence on God, and great Obligations to him, and the infinite Evil of Sin, in ſuch a Light, as had the moſt powerful Tendency to induce them, with penitent, humble, broken Hearts, in an entire Self-diffidence, to put their Truſt only in God, and be wholly devoted to him, to fear him, and love him, and walk in all his Ways, and keep all his Commands, ſeeking his Glory: I ſay, if that Plan was the wiſeſt, that could have been contrived to anſwer theſe Ends; and ſo the beſt ſuited to promote the Glory of God, and the beſt Good of the Iſraelites; and to anſwer many noble Ends in that Age, and in all ſucceeding Generations:—Such, no Doubt, muſt be the Whole of God's moral Government of the World; in which immenſely great Plan, ſo much Sin is permitted, and ſo much Miſery endured. i. e. It muſt be the beſt contrived Scheme poſſible, to advance the Glory of God, and the beſt Good of the moral Syſtem.

I AM ſenſible, there are many OBJECTIONS, which will be apt to ariſe in the Reader's Mind, and which are capable of being put into a very plauſible Dreſs, and which, at firſt Sight, may ſeem to appear quite unanſwerable. Nor am I unwilling they ſhould be ſet in their ſtrongeſt Light. 'Tis beſt to look on all Sides, and that with the utmoſt Care and Impartiality. And every honeſt Reader, who ſincerely deſires to know the Truth, to underſtand the Reaſons of the divine Conduct, and to ſee the Wiſdom, Glory and Beauty of his univerſal Plan, will be naturally diſpoſed to look up to Heaven, and ſay, "O "thou Father of Lights, thou Fountain of all Know-"ledge, ſenſible that we lack Wiſdom, and encourag-"ed by thy gracious Invitation, we come to Thee,

"who

" who giveſt liberally to all that aſk, nor upbraideſt,
" nor denieſt the moſt unworthy, who aſk in the
" Name of Chriſt—Open thou our Eyes, that we
" may ſee the Wiſdom of thy Government, and
" behold the Beauty of thy Conduct, that we may
" not only juſtify thy Ways to Men; but ſtill, more
" than ever, love and fear that fearful and glorious
" Name of thine, The LORD our GOD!"——For,
there is not one Point, in natural or reveal'd Religion, attended with ſo great Difficulties as THIS. Therefore we greatly need to have our Hearts purified, and our Minds enlightened by divine Grace; that, with a good Taſte, and an unbiaſs'd Judgment, we may ſearch into the hidden Myſteries of God's great and eternal Kingdom.

—— The Objections are as follow.——

1. " How could it be for the Honour of the ſu-
" preme Lord and Governor of the Univerſe, to
" ſuffer Satan, his Enemy, by his Lies, to deceive,
" ſeduce and perſuade innocent Man to rebel againſt
" his ſacred Majeſty, and ſubject himſelf and all his
" Race to Death and Ruin?"

2. " How could it be to the beſt Good of the
" moral Syſtem, that this lower World, inſtead of
" being inhabited by a Race of incarnate Angels,
" ever celebrating the Praiſes of their great Creator,
" perfectly happy in his Image & Favour, ſhould ſink
" down into ſo near a Reſemblance to Hell, in Wick-
" edneſs and Woe? O how infinitely better would
" it have been, if inſtead of Sin and Miſery here, and
" eternal Pains of Hell hereafter, to be ſuffered by
" ſuch innumerable Multitudes, all had been for
" ever holy and happy!"

3. " How can it be made to appear, that Sin and
" Miſery were at all needful, much leſs abſolutely
" neceſſary, in a Syſtem originally holy and happy,
" to anſwer any valuable Ends? Would it not be

" to limit the holy ONE of Israel, to say, That he " could find out no other Way, so good as this, to " exalt God, and render the System holy and happy?"

Besides,

4. " IF God wills Sin, then it seems, Sin is agree- " able to his Will: And if from all Eternity he de- " creed the Misery of his Creatures, then it seems " their Misery suits him. Both which, as is grant- " ed on all Hands, are directly contrary to Reason " and to Scripture."

BEFORE we attempt a direct Answer to these Objections, let three or four Things be premised.

1. BE it so, that God's permitting Sin and Misery to enter into the World, appears to us ever so dark; yet this is no Argument at all against the Wisdom, Glory and Beauty of the divine Conduct in this Affair. For, there have been Instances of the divine Conduct, in all Appearance dark to Perfection, which, in the Result, have proved perfect in Wisdom and Beauty. When Jacob saw his Son's Coat all stained with Blood, he had nothing but Darkness and Death before his Eyes. " An evil Beast, said he, hath " devoured him: Joseph is without doubt rent in " Pieces." Wherefore he " rent his Cloaths, and " put on Sackcloth, and mourned for his Son, and " refused to be comforted." Nor had he the least Gleam of Light, for above 20 Years, in this dark Affair. Yea, it grew darker, when Simeon was left bound in Egypt, never to be released, unless Benjamin went also. " Joseph is not," says he, " and " Simeon is not! And ye will take Benjamin away! " All these Things are against me."—So he spake, and so he thought; for so Things appeared.—— But yet afterwards he viewed the whole Plan in a very different Light, as being contrived and brought about by infinite Wisdom and Goodness. And doubtless he was ready to say, " Never let me, a

" poor

" poor ſhort-ſighted Creature, venture again to call
" in Queſtion the Wiſdom of the ſupreme Gover-
" nor of the World, all whoſe Ways are perfect.
" Remember it, O my Soul, from this Time for-
" ward. And for the future, let me learn to do my
" Duty, and chearfully leave God to order all Things
" as he pleaſes: firmly believing all his Conduct to
" be wiſe, whether I can ſee thro' it, or no."

AND how dark to Moſes, fled into the Land of Midian to ſave his Life, muſt the divine Conduct appear, in ſuffering his Brethren, the Children of Iſrael to be ſo cruelly uſed by Pharaoh? Nor had he the leaſt Gleam of Light, in this dark Affair, for forty Years. Yet it afterwards appeared to be full of the wonderful Wiſdom of God, as we have before obſerved. And no doubt, Moſes ſaw it, to his abundant Satisfaction.

BUT as for the Inhabitants of Egypt, when they heard that Pharaoh, their grand Monarch, and all his Hoſts were drowned in the Red Sea——And as for the Iſraelites, whoſe Carcaſes were doom'd to fall in the Wilderneſs—theſe Diſpenſations were to them ſo dark, and they in ſuch a Temper, that it was near or quite impoſſible, they ſhould ſee the Wiſdom of God in them.—Nor was it ſtrange, they could not ſee.—— But this leads me to add,

2. THAT it is not at all ſtrange, that God's Conduct in the Permiſſion of Sin ſhould appear exceeding dark to us, how wiſe, glorious and beautiful ſoever it is in itſelf, and in the Eyes of God.—— (1.) Becauſe our Views of God's grand Plan are ſo very imperfect. When God has finiſhed his Scheme, all holy Beings will eaſily ſee the Beauty of it. For then it will appear, what he had in View, and how wiſely every Thing was ordered to anſwer the nobleſt and beſt Ends. It was eaſy, when Jacob beheld Joſeph Governor over all the Land of Egypt, for him to ſee thro' an Affair, which before, for a long

long Course of Years, had been absolutely inexplicable. Besides—(2.) It is not strange, that God's present Plan of Government appears so dark to us, however divine and glorious it is in it self, considering how ill a Taste we have. It is not to be expected, that fallen Creatures, greatly alienated from the Deity, and of a Temper quite contrary to his, should be suited with his Plans of Government. If wicked Men are Enemies to God, and Enemies to his Law, as the Scriptures teach; *they are not in a Capacity to discern the Beauty of a Plan all over divine. It was not strange, that the Egyptians could not see the Wisdom of God in the Overthrow of Pharaoh and his Hosts. Nor was it strange, that the wicked Israelites were so far from seeing the Wisdom of God in dooming their Carcases to fall in the Wilderness, that they were rather disposed to blaspheme his Name. Yea, they began their Blasphemy before they received their Doom. And when they might have gone right on to Canaan, had it not been their own Fault, they began to say, that God had brought them out of Egypt on Purpose to destroy them. † Just as some desperate Sinners, who are deaf to all the Calls of the Gospel, and refuse to march for the heavenly Canaan, sometimes in Fits of Horror, are ready to think, that God made them on Purpose to damn them. It is easy for us to see the Unreasonableness and Perverseness of the Children of Israel, and impenitent, obstinate Sinners are evidently quite as much to Blame: but you cannot make them see it; nor could Moses make the Israelites see it in their Case. Nor is it to be expected, that Creatures, so far sunk into Depravity and Guilt, will be disposed to justify God and his Ways, altho' all his Dispensations are ever so wise and just. But then their Dislike to the divine Government, be it ever so great,

* Rom. VIII. 7. † Num. XIV.

great, is no Sign but that it is perfectly wiſe, holy, juſt and good. Moſes thought not the leſs honourably of God's Conduct in the Overthrow of Pharaoh, becauſe it looked ſo dark to the Egyptians. Nor do the Inhabitants of Heaven think the leſs honourably of God's Conduct in the Permiſſion and Puniſhment of Sin in general, becauſe it looks ſo dark to obſtinate Sinners.—God has given us an Inſtance—

ABOUT 168 Years before the Babyloniſh Captivity, after the Iſraelites had been in the promiſed Land 693 Years, and by their Perverſeneſs had wearied out God's Patience, ſo that God was provoked to give them up to their Hearts Luſts, Iſaiah was ſent with this awful Meſſage to them, "Go "and tell this People, Hear ye indeed; but under- "ſtand not: ſee ye indeed; but perceive not: "make the Heart of this People fat, and make "their Ears heavy, and ſhut their Eyes" &c. "Then ſaid I, Lord, how long? And he anſwered, "Until the Cities be waſted, without Inhabitant, "and the Houſes without Man, and the Land be "utterly deſolate." † Than which nothing could look more dark to the guilty Jews, thus doomed to Deſtruction. Yet, to the Inhabitants of Heaven, God's Conduct, in all this, appeared to be unutterably glorious. So that upon the Occaſion they even "cried," as under the deepeſt Impreſſions, "Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of Hoſts, the whole "Earth is full of his Glory." † So again in the nineteenth Chapter of the Revelation, we have the heavenly Hoſts repreſented as in the higheſt Extacy of Joy, on Occaſion of the Deſtruction of myſtical Babylon; which, yet, no doubt, when it comes to paſs, will appear inexpreſſibly dark and glorious to the POPE, and his Party; altho' the Poor perſecuted Saints in Popiſh Countries will be ready to join the heavenly Hoſts in their Songs of Praiſe. Yea,

† Iſai. VI.

3. WHEN I think over former Diſpenſations of Providence,—Joſeph's Affair, and how dark it appeared to Jacob—the Caſe of the Iſraelites in ſore Bondage in Egypt, and how dark it appeared to Moſes fled into Midian—And that this Jacob, and this Moſes, were the beſt of Men, and the Favourites of Heaven; and yet the divine Conduct to them was abſolutely unaccountable—And as I look along thro' the Bible, I can think of other Inſtances of the like Nature, one after another, till I come to the Crucifixion of Chriſt; the moſt horrid Sin, that ever was committed: an Affair exceeding dark to the Diſciples, the beſt of Men then in the World, and who were even ready, Things looked ſo dark, to give up all Hopes of his being the Meſſiah: I ſay, when I conſider theſe, I cannot but conclude, that if the moſt holy and knowing Men on Earth were entirely unable to ſolve the forementioned Difficulties, relative to the Permiſſion of Sin, yet it would be no juſt Inducement to doubt of the divine Wiſdom. Yea,

4. HOWEVER dark the Affair appears, or however unanſwerable the Objections may ſeem to be, yet we have ſtrict Demonſtration, that, of all poſſible Plans, this is the beſt. For, before the Foundation of the World, it was at God's Election, to create, or not to create: And of all poſſible Syſtems, he had his Choice: nor was there any Thing to byaſs his Judgment: nor was it poſſible he ſhould make a Miſtake: all Things were open and naked before him: he knew which was the beſt: and he choſe this: and therefore, this, to him appeared preferable to any other: and therefore it was really the beſt.

AND what then if we are not able fully to ſolve the Difficulties? Is it not altogether reaſonable to conclude, that it is owing to our not ſeeing the

whole

whole Plan, or to our Want of a good Taste, or both? It is certain, that we are very far from a full View of the whole Plan. We came into Existence, as it were, but Yesterday. We are just emerging out of Non-entity. We still border on Non-existence. We are but half awake, if so much. When we enter into the eternal World, if this short Period is well spent, we may hope to have our intellectual Powers quite awake, and to be in a better Capacity to search into the Nature, and discern the Beauties of God's eternal Kingdom.—And besides the Narrowness of our present Views, our Taste too, is at present much vitiated. The best of Men in this World, are far from that high Relish for moral Beauty, which is needful to render them good Judges, on a Plan so altogether holy and divine, as this must certainly be. And while we are are conscious to our selves, that, with Peter, we are apt to "savour, not "the Things which be of God; but the Things "which be of Men:" and that our Minds lie under many Byasses and Prejudices; too strongly attached to our private Interest, but little concerned for the Honour of the divine Majesty, or for the Honour of his Government, and the Welfare of his everlasting Kingdom,——little caring for any Thing, farther than our own Interest is concerned,——Too much like the Israelites in the Wilderness, who were always murmuring against God and against Moses; altho' God was all the while taking the wisest Methods with them, and Moses was faithful to him that appointed him: but if their Appetites and Desires were crossed, and they disappointed in their narrow selfish Schemes, they could see no Beauty in God's Conduct, nor Glory in his grand Designs; but wished themselves back again to Egypt: not caring what became of the Honour of God's great Name, and quite stupid to all the noble Ends God had in View,

in their Separation from the Reſt of the World, to be his peculiar People :——I ſay, while we are conſcious to this Low-ſpiritedneſs, to this mean, narrow, ſelfiſh Temper, and feel our ſelves ſo much untouch'd with the infinite Greatneſs and Glory of the Deity, and ſo little intereſted in, and concerned for the Honour of his great Name, and the everlaſting Eſtabliſhment of his Authority, and general Good of the moral Syſtem, we cannot but be ſenſible, that we are very unfit Judges on the Beauty and Goodneſs of his Plan ; as 'tis eaſy to ſee, the Iſraelites were, on the Wiſdom and Beauty of God's Conduct with them in the Wilderneſs. They were too low-ſpirited, and of too mean and ſelfiſh Views, to be ſtruck with the Beauty of thoſe noble and God-like Deſigns, God had in View, in their Separation from the Reſt of the World. To God it appeared of vaſt Importance, as Things were then ſituate in the World, to give a Check to the univerſal Spread of Idolatry and Ignorance, and to revive the Knowledge of the true God, and of the true Religion. And in a View to theſe noble Ends, all his Conduct in Egypt, at the Red-ſea, and in the Wilderneſs, appeared to him perfectly wiſe and beautiful. To the Iſraelites, nothing appeared of Importance, but that their Intereſt, Eaſe and Comfort ſhould be conſulted, and provided for: Which not being done to their Minds in the Wilderneſs, they heartily repented they ever hearkened to Moſes, or ever left Egypt, and would have deſerted Moſes, made a Captain, and returned, had not Almightineſs interpoſed : And the Idols, Leaks, Onions and Fleſh Pots of Egypt, would have given them Content ; while the Name of the God of Abraham ſunk into univerſal Contempt by the Means, among all Nations, and Idolatry became more eſtabliſhed than ever ; as it would have done, had they deſerted Moſes, and returned, as was by them propoſed.——

posed.——Now 'tis plain, this people were no proper Judges of the Wisdom and Beauty of God's Conduct. They were of so ill a Taste, and their Temper was so different from God's, that they would naturally be blind to the Beauty of his Ways, and alway stand ready to quarrel with him.

HAD their Temper from the very first been [illegible] and their Taste good, they might have had [illegible] cent Insight into God's Designs, altho' [illegible] a full View: I say, a sufficient Insi[illegible] Designs, to have discovered a great[illegible] in his Conduct, in suffering Phara[illegible] and bid Defiance, till all Go[illegible] wrought in Egypt; and afterw[illegible] Heart, and pursue Israel, and [illegible] the Red-Sea; that there God [illegible] er, and cause his Name to b[illegible] all the Earth; that Israel mig[illegible] the LORD, and might in A[illegible] Children, and their Childrens [illegible] mighty Works; that they n[illegible] Gods of the Heathen were no G[illegible] ever cleave to the GOD of their Fa[illegible]

NOR had they the least Reason at any [illegible] from the Day they passed thro' the Red-Sea[illegible] like one Step which God took: nor would they [illegible] done it, had they had a right Disposition. Yea, a good Taste would have enabled them to have seen much Wisdom in all God's Ways. "Here in this "Wilderness, where there is neither Bread, nor "Water, nor Flesh, even here is a good Place for "the God of Abraham, our Father, to shew his "Wisdom, Power and Goodness, and train us up "to a Sense of his Allsufficiency, and bring us to "live wholly upon him, as Children upon a Fa-"ther, and to be wholly devoted to him." Thus might they have thought.——And in stead of mur-

muring at every new Difficulty, and then falling under the Frowns of the Almighty, they might have ſpent their whole Time in Prayer and Praiſe—till they arrived at Mount Sinai—And while they were ſetting up the Tabernacle—And while the Spies were gone to ſearch out the Land.—And had they [illegible]e.ſo, had they been of ſuch a Temper, and ſpent [illegible]e thus, thoſe 14 or 15 Months, all in Prayer [illegible]he whole Congregation would have been [illegible]ave diſregarded the ten Spies, and chear-[illegible]ined with Caleb and Joſhua, ſaying, [illegible]ith us, there is no Danger. Have [illegible]hat he did in Egypt, at the Red-[illegible]nd he that has done theſe Things, [illegible]r, or Willingneſs to do what [illegible] our Unbelief and Perverſeneſs [illegible] him to caſt us off." And ſo [illegible]ned right on to Canaan, driven [illegible] and taken Poſſeſſion.——But [illegible]er every Way the Reverſe. And [illegible]t. And it happened to them [illegible]heir Carcaſes were doomed to [illegible]neſs—they behaved like wild Bulls [illegible]e Occaſion — blaſphemed God — [illegible]rmed at Moſes—till God was obliged to ſtrike them dead by Hundreds, and by Thouſands, from Time to Time, before he could ſubdue them.

Now "they were our Enſamples, and theſe "Things were written for our Inſtruction." * Let us take Heed therefore, that we do not murmur at the divine Conduct in the Government of the World, as they did. Nor venture blaſphemouſly to ſay, "He has brought us out of Egypt into this Wil-"derneſs, on Purpoſe to deſtroy us——He has "ſuffered Mankind to fall into a State of Sin and "Miſery, that he might delight himſelf in the "eternal

* 1 Cor. X. 2.

" eternal Torments of the damned." Whenas, the Iſraelites would not have fallen in the Wilderneſs, had they not perverſely deſpiſed the good Land, which flowed with Milk and Honey; and refuſed to give Credit to the Revelation they had of God's Readineſs to lead them into Canaan. [And let it be remembred, that it was not God's Decree, but their own dearly beloved Luſts and Corruptions, which influenced them to conduct as they did.] Nor ſhall we ever be ſentenced to Hell, unleſs we deſpiſe the Glories of Heaven, and prefer the Leeks and Onions of Egypt, the Pleaſures of Sin and of this World; and ſo turn our Backs upon God, and refuſe to give Credit to the Revelation made to us in the Goſpel, of God's Readineſs to be reconciled thro' Chriſt, and to grant us his holy Spirit to lead us on to the heavenly Canaan; and refuſe to comply with the Goſpel-Way of Life. And if we do act thus wickedly, it is as reaſonable we ſhould periſh, as it was, that the Carcaſes of the wicked Iſraelites ſhould fall in the Wilderneſs. And as their Carcaſes falling in the Wilderneſs was over-ruled by infinite Wiſdom for the general Good of that Community, and to fill the whole Earth with his Glory: So will the righteous Puniſhment of the Wicked eternally in Hell be over-ruled to the Good of the intelligent Syſtem, and God will be exalted throughout all his Dominions. Read *Rev.* XIX. 1,—6.

The wicked Iſraelites did not feel themſelves to Blame, to be ſure, not much to Blame, for all their Murmurings and Rebellions. " Who among " Mortals," they were ready to ſay, " would con- " duct otherwiſe than we do, under the like Cir- " cumſtances! We were always againſt leaving " Egypt, and entering on ſo wild an Expedition. " God has contrived it on Purpoſe for our Deſtruc- " tion! Fools that we were, ever to leave the Fleſh-

" Pots of Egypt ! Would toGod we had lived and " died there ! This had been our higheſt Intereſt. " Therefore let us make aCaptain, and return, and " make our Peace with the Egyptians as well as " we can, and ſubmit to our Bondage for ever." When therefore the Judgments of God came upon them in ſuch a dreadful Manner, they would naturally be ſo far from ſeeing the Juſtice or Wiſdom of the divine Conduct, that their Hearts would be full of blaſphemous Thoughts againſt God and Moſes ; and the whole divineConduct would appear dark and unaccountable, to the higheſt Degree.—— And in all this they ſhew the very Spirit of unhumbled obſtinate Sinners, who are inſenſible of their Sin and Guilt, and Deſert of eternal Damnation, and are ready to ſay, " God brought us into Being " on Purpoſe to damn us. We had no Hand in it. " We would not have choſe it. Would to God " we had never been born ! Oh that we could re- " turn to Non-exiſtence ! That would be our true " Intereſt." And inſtead of ſeeing the Wiſdom and Juſtice of God in his Diſpenſations towards them, they are full of blaſphemous Thoughts, and the whole of the divine Conduct appears to them dark and unaccountable, to the higheſt Degree.

HAD the Iſraelites been thoroughly ſenſible how hateful their Egyptian Temper, their carnal Diſpoſition, their Infidelity, and their continual Murmurings were ; and how much to blame they appeared in the Sight of God ; the Juſtice of the divine Conduct would, by them, have been eaſily ſeen. And that would have prepared them to have ſeen the Wiſdom of his Ways too. " 'Tis fit, ſuch Wretches " as we, ſhould be ſhut out of the promiſed Land, " and that our Carcaſes ſhould fall in this Wilder- " neſs. And righteous art thou, O Lord, in our " Doom. We have but our juſt Deſerts. No

" Wonder

" Wonder the Earth swallows up such Monsters, " and that Thousands are struck dead in a Moment, " who are guilty of such Crimes. The Honour " of the divine Majesty requires this Severity. And " even the Good of our Posterity makes it necessary." Thus would they have thought.——Nor can unhumbled, obstinate Sinners ever discern the Wisdom and Beauty of the divine Government in general, until first their uncircumcised Hearts are humbled, and they cordially approve of the Justice of God's Law, by which they stand condemned——And are " born again"——As it is written, " Except a " Man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom " of God." For it is the " pure in Heart," and they only, that " shall SEE God." For " the natural Man," who is destitute of a spiritual, holy, divine Taste, " discerneth not the Things of the Spirit of God"——seeth not the divine Beauty of the Law, or of the Gospel—and for the same Reason is blind to the Wisdom, Glory and Beauty of God's universal Plan.——So very blind, that the full and clear Revelation to be made of it at the Day of Judgment, how convincing soever it may be to their Reason and Conscience, will be far from suiting their Hearts. Nor will the Beauty and Amiableness of it be by them ever discerned. For as the obstinate Israelites, whose Carcases fell in the Wilderness, never saw the Beauty of God's Conduct towards that Congregation; so neither will those, who die impenitent, ever see the Beauty and Glory of God's universal Plan.—But in Heaven it will be seen.

To conclude, As all the hard Thoughts of the divine Conduct, which are to be found in the Hearts of Mankind, thro' a fallen, depraved, guilty World, arise entirely from our partial Views and bad Taste; so there is no other Remedy, but, first of all, to have

our Hearts renewed and ſanctified by divine Grace; and then to endeavour to enlarge our Views of God's univerſal Plan, and ſearch into the Nature of the divine Government, and the glorious Deſigns and noble Ends which infinite Wiſdom has in View, and will at laſt accompliſh.

AND as the BIBLE contains an authentic Hiſtory of the Conduct of the Deity, for a long Series of many hundred Years; and by prophetic Repreſentations, opens to our View Things yet to come to paſs, as far down as to the End of the World, and the general Judgment, and the Conſummation of all Things; ſo hither ſhould we come, with honeſt Minds and pure Hearts, and form all our Notions of God's moral Perfections, the Nature of his moral Government, and of his Views, Ends and Deſigns in all his Works, from what we find here written. Nor ought any Solutions of Difficulties to be accounted right, but ſuch as quadrate exactly with, yea are the natural Reſult of, Scripture-Repreſentations.

SOME of the Heathen Philoſophers, who knew no better, imagined there were two Gods. A good God, the Author of all Good in the Syſtem, whom they called OROMASDES: and an evil God, the Author of all Evil in the Syſtem, whom they called ARIMANIUS. But it is enough for us, to confute this Hypotheſis, that the BIBLE teaches us, that there is but ONE GOD; and that he is abſolutely ſupreme; and does according to his Pleaſure in the Armies of Heaven, and among the Inhabitants of the Earth; and that his Providence extends to every Thing, both good and bad.—And it is ſuppoſed, that thoſe remarkable Words, in Iſai. XLV. 6, 7. directed to Cyrus, King of Perſia, where the forementioned Notion, of two Gods, anciently prevailed, were deſigned in expreſs Contradiction to that Doctrine; "I am the LORD, and there is none

"elſe.

" elſe. I form Light, and create Darkneſs : I " make Peace, and create Evil : I the LORD do all " theſe Things."

SOME, who profeſs to adhere to divine Revelation, in order to ſolve the Difficulties relative to God's Permiſſion of Sin, affirm, it came to paſs unexpectedly to the divine Being ; as he was not capable of foreſeeing what would be the Conduct of free Agents. But it is enough for us to confute this Hypotheſis, that we have Hundreds of Inſtances in Scripture, of God's Fore-knowledge of the Conduct of free Agents, and that it is a Doctrine conſtantly taught, and inculcated in the Bible. *

OTHERS, to ſolve the Difficulties, have aſſerted, that it was not in the Power of God to prevent the Fall of Free-Agents, without deſtroying their Free-Agency, and turning them into intelligent Machines, uncapable of Virtue, as well as of Vice. But it is enough for us, to confute this Hypotheſis, that it is contrary to plain Scripture-Repreſentations, which teach us, that the Man Chriſt Jeſus, our ſecond Adam, was a free Agent, capable of the higheſt Virtue, and yet in a confirmed State, ſo that he could not ſin ; as are alſo all the Saints and Angels now in Heaven. From whence it appears, that it was in God's Power to have confirmed all Intelligences at firſt ; and left them moral Agents notwithſtanding.

OTHERS, to ſolve the Difficulties ſtill more fully, have not only aſſerted as above, but alſo denied the Eternity of Hell-Torments, and affirmed the univerſal Salvation of Men and Devils. But it is eno' for us, to confute this Hypotheſis, that inſtead of its being taught in Scripture, it is contrary to what thoſe infallible Writings affirm, in Language, as plain, and expreſs, and repeated, as could have been expected,

* See this proved at large in Mr. *Edwards* on Liberty, Pag. 98—116.

pected, if God had intended to eſtabliſh us ever ſo fully in the Belief of the Eternity of Hell-Torments. Of which, more afterwards.

But it will be ſaid, "If God certainly foreknew "that Man would fall, unleſs he interpoſed, and "undertook for their Safety: and if it was in his "Power to have done it: and if Millions would be "eternally miſerable in Hell, if he did it not: why "did not he interpoſe and undertake"?——Not, I dare ſay, for want of Fore-thought, or of a thorough weighing of the Affair, with all its Conſequences: for he had had the whole in full View, from eternal Ages.—Nor will any pretend, it was abſolutely without any End at all: for an infinitely wiſe Being always acts upon Deſign.

"Now God of his infinite Mercy grant, that by "a diligent Attention to the divine Oracles, and "thro' the Illumination of the holy Spirit, we may "come to ſuch an Underſtanding of this Diſpenſa"tion of his Providence, as may tend to create in us "the greateſt Dread of Sin, and the higheſt Vene"ration for the divine Majeſty; and ſhew us our "entire abſolute Dependence on God, and infinite "Obligations to him; that we may learn to be per"fectly ſelf-diffident, to truſt wholly in God, and "live wholly to him, thro' Jeſus Chriſt; to whom "be Glory in the Church, World without End." AMEN.

SERMON

The WISDOM of God in the Permiſſion of SIN.

SERMON III.

GENESIS L. 20.

——YE thought Evil againſt Me; but God meant it unto Good——

WERE the ſupreme Monarch of the Univerſe an arbitrary, deſpotic Being, conducting without any Regard to what is fitting and beſt, having no Reaſon or Motive for what he doth, nor any End in View; all our Enquiries and Reſearches into the Wiſdom of God in the Permiſſion of Sin, muſt be for ever in vain. If he makes his Will his only Rule of Action: and wills as he does, without any Reaſon or Motive; a Stop, an eternal Stop, ought to be put to all Enquiries. For, no Reaſon is to be ſought for a Thing, which is done abſolutely without any Reaſon at all.—But if the ſupreme Monarch of the Univerſe is a Being of infinite Wiſdom, and always chooſes what is beſt, and does what is moſt fitting, working all Things *according to the* COUNSEL *of his own Will* (*Eph.* I. 11.) then

then his univerſal Plan muſt be, yea, we may be quite certain that it actually is, perfect in Wiſdom, Glory and Beauty.——And now it becomes us to awaken all the Powers of our Souls to Attention: and it is worth our while to dwell whole Days and Months and Years, on this greateſt and nobleſt of all Themes. And if we feel that the immenſe Greatneſs of the Plan confounds us, and find our ſelves ſtill at a Loſs, yet being aſſured, the whole is perfect in Beauty, we will look into it, as far as we can; and haſten to prepare for the World of Light above, where the Glories of this grand Scheme will open to our View, and afford Matter of the ſweeteſt Contemplation, and moſt divine Delight thro' eternal Ages.——Since we are but juſt emerged out of Non-exiſtence, have ſo very ſmall an Acquaintance with God's World, and ſo feeble and weak a Taſte, ſo poor a Diſcernment of what is moſt beautiful and beſt, it muſt not ſeem ſtrange to us, if we can ſee but a little Way into the Glories of the divine Plan. Yet knowing that it is ſo very exceeding glorious, being choſen by infinite Wiſdom before all other poſſible Plans, altho' infinite in Number and Variety in the View of Omniſcience, we may ardently long to look into it, and ſearch the Scriptures daily, ſtudy the Nature of the Deity, and lift up our Eyes to Heaven for divine Light and Inſtruction.

ALL that hath been ſaid in the foregoing Sermons, being kept in Mind, that we may now enter directly into a View of the Wiſdom of God in the Permiſſion of Sin, and lay a Foundation for the Solution of all Objections, we muſt look back to the Beginning of God's Works, and view his Conduct from Step to Step, and enquire into the Reaſons of each as we go along. And God grant us attentive Minds, and right and enlarged Views, and a good Taſte to diſcern the Beauty and Glory of his univerſal

verſal Plan!—And let us begin as the Bible begins. For that beſt of Books is to be our conſtant Guide, the Man of our Counſel, a Light to our Feet, and a Lamp to our Paths, in all the Way we go.

1. A GRAND and noble THEATRE was erected by GOD; a ſtanding, viſible Evidence of his eternal Power and Godhead; compleatly furniſhed out, as a Place or Habitation for Man; and as the grand Stage of Action, and Scene of all God's wonderful Works, till the Day of Judgment.—What *Uſe* is to be made of the material Syſtem after the Day of Judgment, ſhall be conſidered in its Place.

WHEN we read the *firſt Verſe* in *Geneſis*,—*In the Beginning God created the Heaven and the Earth*—with what follows in that *Chapter*—We behold the whole material Syſtem ariſing out of Nothing into Being, by God's almighty Power.—Firſt, it exiſts a CHAOS, *without Form and void*, buried in profound Darkneſs; but, in ſix Days, the whole is ſet in a moſt harmonious and beautiful Order; a viſible and noble Specimen of the infinite Power, Wiſdom and Goodneſs of the GREAT ETERNAL.—And how know we but that the intellectual Syſtem, reduced to ſo near a Reſemblance of a *Chaos*, by the Revolt and prevailing Influence of the *Angels who left their firſt Eſtate*, will yet under the Conduct of infinite Wiſdom, even under the Conduct of *Meſſiah the Prince*, ſtand forth in perfect Order, and the moſt beautiful Harmony, a bright and noble Image of all the glorious Perfections of the *inviſible God?*

2. A THEATER being erected, proper to raiſe in intelligent Creatures, ſublime & exalted Thoughts of God, in the next Place, MAN, a noble Creature, an intelligent-free-Agent, capable of moral Action, and a proper Subject of moral Government, is formed by God, and placed upon the Stage, as Head of a numerous Race, and made Lord of this

lower World. " God created Man in his own " Image, in the Image of God created he him : " Male and Female created he them. And God " bleſſed them, and God ſaid unto them, Be fruit- " and multiply, and repleniſh the Earth, and ſub- " due it : and have Dominion over the Fiſh of the " Sea, and over the Fowl of the Air, and over every " living Thing that moveth upon the Face of the " Earth." *Gen.* I. 27, 28.

AND here it ought to be obſerved, and it ought never to be forgotten by us, that God, in the Capacity of *Creator*, *did well* by his Creature, Man. He was made capable of knowing, loving, obeying and enjoying God ; as alſo of ſeeing the Beauty and taſting the Sweetneſs of the Fruits of Paradiſe : and he had a high Reliſh for Knowledge and Happineſs.—Beſides, he was formed for Society, and had an agreable Companion, and the Proſpect of a happy Poſterity, who would grow up and honour and love him as their common Father, thro' all Generations. And he had open to his View all the Glories of the viſible Creation, to inſpire him with ſublime and exalted Thoughts of God, who had brought him into Exiſtence, and made him Lord of all here below. Surely, God, the Creator, *dealt well* by his Creature, Man, whom he thus made but a-little lower than the Angels, and crowned with Glory and Honour. *And God ſaw every Thing that he made, and behold it was very Good. Gen.* I. 31.

And therefore,

3. MAN was under the greateſt Obligations to love the infinitely glorious God, his Maker, with all his Heart, and to be for ever in Subjection to his Authority, and obedient to his Will. And this was not only his Duty, but ſuch was his Make, that it would have afforded him the moſt refined Pleaſure and Delight. Therefore let it be repeated

again,

again, that *God, his Creator, had done well by his Creature, Man.* * And if after all this, he should fall from God, it must be his own Fault; nor could he any longer deserve the Favour of his Maker, but to sink under his everlasting Displeasure. Therefore,

OF Course his everlasting Welfare must depend on his good Behaviour. And had there been no Covenant or Constitution at all, only the mere Law of Nature; yet according to that, it would have become the *most High*, as moral Governour and Judge of the World, in Case of the Rebellion of his Creature, Man, to have testified his high Displeasure against his Crime, in his everlasting Destruction. *For the Wages of Sin is Death.* The Honour of the Deity would have called for such a Punishment, as well as the Good of the intelligent System, that all might hear and fear and do no more so Wickedly. Wherefore God, as the holy and good Governour of the World, expressly assures his Creature, Man, what he might depend upon in Case of Disobedience. *In the Day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die. Gen.* II. 17.

AND thus also God did *well* by his Creature, Man, in the Capacity of his moral Governour. He let him know his great Obligations to Obedience: how much he insisted upon it: how highly he should resent his Disobedience: That he would cast him, not only out of his Favour, and out of Paradise, but out of his World: Would even put him to Death, and send his guilty Soul, under the divine Displea-

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* *Question.* How was it possible for Man, created in such holy and happy Circumstances, ever to sin?

Answer. IT is thought by some very difficult, to answer this Question. And had neither Angels nor Men ever sinned, perhaps it might have been thought an impossible Thing, that they ever should have sinned. Which View of the Case, I desire the Reader to keep in Mind, and mean while wait a little for a Solution of the Difficulty proposed.

sure, naked, forlorn, undone, to everlasting Despair and Woe, no Hope being given of any Relief. THOU SHALT SURELY DIE.——And what more could God have done, as his moral Governour, to have prevented his Apostacy and Ruin.——If after all this he would venture to disobey, must he not be for ever inexcusable?

4. GOD took it for granted, that he had now done enough, and said enough; and might, becoming his Character, as his Lord and King, not only demand, but reasonably expect Obedience, & justly suspend his everlasting Welfare on that Condition. Yea, he judged, that as Governour of the World, it became him to do so, that he might secure his own Rights, and maintain the Honour of his Authority. Nor did he look upon himself obliged to be his Keeper, and become Surety for him, and undertake to preserve him from Sin, by his constant Interposition: But judged, he might, having done enough & said enough, now leave him to his own Choice, as having all needful Qualifications to render him a proper Subject of moral Government, having sufficient internal Abilities, & sufficient outward Advantages to know and do his Duty. And accordingly God did leave him to his Choice.——He was deceived by Satan's Lies,—broke the divine Law, and fell into Ruin. As the Event, recorded in the *third Chapter of Genesis*, sufficiently proves.——But God and his Throne were guiltless.

5. OUR first Parents Design in eating of the forbidden Fruit, was, to make a surprising Advance in Knowledge and Happiness; not by such slow Degrees as they had before expected, but at once to *become as Gods*. Deceived by Satan's Lies, captivated by this Temptation, the Fruit also appearing pleasant to the Eye, and good for Food, they took and eat.

SATAN's Design was to bring Dishonour upon God, Ruin upon Man, and then to lift up himself, exult

exult and triumph in his Deed. Being an inveterate Enemy to God, and to all Good; and having a peculiar Spight at Man,* nothing could give him greater Joy, than to ruin a new-made World, which, as it appeared to him, God had created for the Honour of his great Name, and as a Place of happy Abode for his Creature, Man;——to see God's Creature give more Credit to him, than to his Maker; to see God's Subject desert his rightful Sovereign & Lord, and join with him; to see God's Authority disregarded, & himself obeyed; I say, to see God thus disobeyed, disappointed, dishonoured, Man ruined, this lower Creation spoilt, while he himself is believed, obeyed, honoured, would perfectly suit the Devil's Heart, so full of Pride, of Enmity against God, and Ill-will to Man.

GOD's Design, in permitting Satan so far to succeed in this most Hellish Attempt, was, that he might take Occasion to bring more Honour to God, and to make the good Part of the Creation more humble, holy and happy. And finally, as effectually to disappoint Satan in all his Schemes, as was Pharaoh, when he and his Army lay over-whelmed in

* THE Angels are appointed ministring Spirits, to minister to those who are the Heirs of Salvation. (Heb. I. 14) And, perhaps, as soon as Man was created, it was revealed to all the Hosts of Heaven, that it should be their Employment, to attend upon Adam and his numerous Race. Perhaps Satan might think this too degrading, for one so superior to Man, as he perceived himself to be, to be thus employed. And so Pride, his first Sin, might take Occasion to rise in his Heart. And to be revenged on God and Man, both at once, he laid a Scheme for Man's Seduction and Ruin. And from that Day to this, hath never ceased to study our Mischief.—If this Occasion of the Fall of Angels is a mere Conjecture, yet it is the most probable I know of: And what makes it the more probable, it will account for Satan's great Zeal for the Destruction of Mankind.

the Bottom of the Red-Sea. Which Design, for the the Encouragement of our first Parents, was hinted to them soon after the Fall. *The Seed of the Woman shall bruise the Serpent's Head. Gen.* III. 15.

WHEN the great OMNISCIENT saw, that Rebellion would break out in Heaven, and the Infection reach down to this lower World, and spread all over the Earth, he practically said—"After all I have done "for them as their Creator, and said to them as their "moral Governour, I and my Throne are guitless, "—to themselves I leave them—and now will it "be known, what is in their Hearts; and I also "will take Occasion to shew what is in my Heart: "and they shall *know that I am the* LORD, and the "whole intelligent System shall *be filled with my* "*Glory.*" (analogous to what is written in 2 *Chron.* XXXII. 31. *Deut.* VIII. 2. *Exod.* X. 2.)

1. God knew that it belonged to the Nature of all finite Beings, to be mutable and peccable; and that the best might degenerate so far as to become the worst: no Being in the System being by Nature immutable, but God alone. As it is written, *I am the* LORD, *I change not. Mal.* III. 6.

To be by Nature immutable, is peculiar to the Deity, and cannot be communicated to a Creature; because it implies Infinity. God only is capable of such a compleat View of all Things, past, present, and to come, at once, as leaves no Room for any new Views. And his Views being for ever exactly the same, there is in his Nature a fixt Foundation for Immutability in all his Purposes and Determinations. Whereas, the most exalted of all finite Beings, being capable of only partial Views of Things, are constantly enlarging and varying their Views and Prospects, and are liable to have a Set of Thoughts wholly new, which may lead on to new Determinations and Purposes. And amidst an infinite Variety

of

of new Views and new Determinations, Things may possibly so appear, as that the most exalted of mere Creatures may make a wrong Judgment, and take a wrong Turn, and so fall into Sin and under the divine Displeasure.

WHEREFORE to God, who saw the finite Capacities of finite Intelligences, and their consequent Liableness, as Things might happen, to Deception and Apostasy, it plainly appeared, that he could not safely depend upon their Stability. He knew himself to be the only immutable Being in the System, the same Yesterday, to Day and forever; but *he put no Trust in his Servants, and his Angels he charged with Folly* (*Job.* IV. 18.) or as it is elsewhere expressed, (*Job.* XV. 15.) *He putteth no Trust in his Saints; yea, the Heavens are not clean in his Sight.*

AND yet, for Things to continue for ever in such an uncertain, unsettled State, must have been undesirable to the immutable Being, who loves Immutability in himself, and the Image of it in his Creatures; and loves to see his Authority established, and his Kingdom settled in Peace and everlasting Order and Harmony; and loves to see the eternal Welfare of his Creatures on a safe Footing, and clear out of the Reach of any possible Danger.

BUT how much soever to the Honour of God, and to the Good of the System; and how desirable soever in these two Respects, it might appear in the Sight of God, that the intelligent System should unanimously adhere and cleave for ever to the Lord; yet, in the Nature of Things, there could be no certain Security for this, unless he himself, the only immutable Being, should undertake and become Surety for all his Creatures. There could be no certain Dependance upon Creatures, left to themselves, how great and excellent soever their original Powers: because, after all, they

were finite; and therefore must have new Views, and so were liable to wrong Determinations. God, who was perfectly acquainted with the Nature of himself, and o fall created Beings, plainly saw, that himself alone was by Nature absolutely immutable, and that all created Intelligences must, after all their noble Endowments and exalted Stations, be absolutely dependent on him, not only for the Continuation of their Beings and original Powers; but also for their Preservation from Sin and Apostacy. As it is written, *There is none good, but One, that is God.* Mar. X. 18.

2. HOWEVER, innocent holy Beings, who as yet never felt the least Inclination to swerve from God, but on the contrary were entirely wrapt up in him, could not easily perceive how it should be possible for them to turn away from the Deity, and become Apostate. Yea, such a Thing would naturally appear to be impossible, as they felt no Inclination that Way, nor had in View any Thing which seemed to be of the Nature of a Temptation to it. Nor was it possible, they should feel an Inclination to sin, while innocent: for the least Motion of their Hearts towards Sin, would constitute them Sinners, in the Eyes of perfect Purity. Nor was it possible they should feel any Force in any Temptation to Sin, unless the Temptation excited in them some Inclination that Way: for if they felt no Inclination that Way, then the Temptation would appear to have no Weight in it. If it weighed nothing with them, it would appear to have no Weight in itself. So that, as long as they remained innocent, they could neither feel any Inclination to Sin, nor perceive any Force in any Temptation.——Wherefore it must be very unnatural to an innocent holy Being, to apprehend any Danger of his ever turning from God. Nor could he easily be brought to know the Mutability

bility of his Nature, or ever to imagine it could be in his Heart to ſin againſt God, unleſs left to find out the Truth by his own ſad Experience.

LET any Man attend to the Conſtitution of his own Mind, and he will ſoon perceive how unnatural it is, to think our ſelves in Danger of a Crime, to which we never felt the leaſt Inclination, nor ever once thought of any Thing in Nature, that could be a Temptation; yea, to which, whenever we think of it, we feel the greateſt Averſion. As, what dutiful Child ever thought himſelf in Danger of murdering his Father, whom he greatly loves and honours? And if a divinely inſpired Prophet ſhould tell him, that he, one Day, ſhould be guilty of ſuch a ſhocking Crime, he could hardly believe it. This naturally brings to mind the Story of *Hazael* (in 2 *King.* VIII. 11—13.) who, when the Prophet told him, how he ſhould *burn the ſtrong Holds of Iſrael, ſlay their young Men with the Sword, and daſh their Children, and rip up their Women with Child*, having never felt any Inclination to ſuch Barbarities toward them, and not foreſeeing any Temptation he ſhould ever have to commit ſuch Things, ſo ſhocking to human Nature, readily anſwered, *Is thy Servant a Dog, that he ſhould do this great Thing!*—So when our bleſſed Saviour told *Peter*, that he ſhould *deny him that very Night*, he was far from thinking it was in his Heart to do ſo. Nor could the Prediction of Chriſt induce him to believe, that it would come to paſs. Yea, it did not ſeem to him, there was really any Danger of it, as he had no Inclination that Way; yea, felt the greateſt Averſion to it. And it did not ſeem, that any Thing could tempt him to it; No, not even Death itſelf. For he felt, he had rather die, than do it. Mar. XIV. 29. *Altho' all ſhould be offended, yet will not I.* Ver. 31. *If I ſhould die with thee, I will not deny thee in any wiſe.* And this was the Voice of them all,

all, tho' Christ had expresly told them, *All ye shall be offended because of me this Night*; and even confirmed his Prediction by an ancient Prophecy,—*For it is written, I will smite the Shepherd, and the Sheep shall be scattered.* Ver. 27.—Much less would innocent, holy Beings, who had never heard that any one Intelligence had ever fallen, or ever discerned any Thing in the State of their Minds within, or in the Situation of Things without, that had the least Tendency that Way, but every Thing to the contrary,—I say, much less would such Beings be apt to suspect any Danger of their forsaking the Fountain of all Good, and turning Enemies to the God that made them. Nay, rather, I imagine, they would be apt to look upon it, as a Thing, in its own Nature, near or quite impossible.* Therefore,

3. IF God, in a Sense of their Mutability, out of his own mere Goodness and sovereign Grace, to prevent

* OBJECT. "THE Disciples were guilty of Self-Confidence, and were to blame. Surely holy Beings have "no blameable Self-Confidence."

ANSW. THEY have not.—The Disciples might have known better. They had heard of the Angels Fall, of Adam's Fall, and of the Falls of Noah, Lot, David, and other most eminent Men; and had had abundant Experience of the Wickedness and Deceitfulness of their own Hearts, all which, together with Christ's express Prediction, rendered them to blame. Yet it will not follow, that an innocent holy Being, just come into Existence, full of Love to God, having never heard of the Fall of any, nor ever thought of any Temptation to Sin, is to blame, because it seems to him impossible, that ever he should turn Enemy to the God that made him, or once go contrary to his Will. "How can I do it?" would he be ready to say. "In all Nature there is nothing to "tempt me: but every Thing to the contrary." And the more he loved God, the more impossible would it seem, that he should ever revolt.

vent their Apostasy, and the infinitely dreadful Consequences, which, in a Government so perfectly holy as his, Sin must expose them to, all which lay open to his View :——I say, if God had become Surety for all Intelligences, if the only immutable Being had, in such Circumstances, undertaken by his ever watchful Eye, and the constant Influences of his Spirit, to have rendered all Intelligences immutably Good ; although the Kindness done them, in God's Account, had been full infinitely Great, yet not so in theirs : for they would not have been in a Capacity to have discerned the Kindness, scarce at all : Much less, to have been so thoro'ly sensible of their absolute Dependence on God, and infinite Obligations to him, as now, according to the present Plan, the saved will for ever be.

HAD all Intelligences been preserved in their original Rectitude, and so never felt in themselves the least Inclination to Sin, but always perfectly to the contrary, they would have been apt to have thought it impossible, that any holy Being should ever depart from God ; and so would not have been apt to have attributed their Immutability to God, their Preserver, but rather to their own inherent Goodness. And so their absolute Dependance on God, the only immutable Being, and their infinite Obligations to him, for interposing to prevent their Apostacy, would not have been seen. Nor could they have had any proper Sense of the self-moving Goodness and sovereign Grace of God, exercised towards them in this Affair. In a Word, God would not have been exalted so highly, nor would these Intelligences have looked on themselves so infinitely beneath him, so dependent, so much obliged ; nor would divine sovereign Grace have flood in such a clear and striking Point of Light, as was really desirable. The Truth would have lain, in a Measure, concealed

concealed, beyond the Reach of finite Capacities, there being in Nature no Means provided, whereby they could have come to the clear and full Knowledge of it. Therefore,

4. THEY were not fit to be confirmed; nor would it have been to the Honour of God, to have confirmed them, as Things ſtood.—They were not prepared to feel, that they ſtood in Need of this *Super-Creation*-Grace, (if I may ſo call it) not as yet knowing, nor, for ought appears, ſo much as ſuſpecting, that they were in any Danger. They ſtood firm within themſelves, nor was there any Thing in univerſal Nature to draw them aſide from God, as it ſeemed to them. And had God then interpoſed, it muſt have been to them an inſenſible Interpoſition; of which they felt no Need, and for which they were unprepared to be thankful.

IF God had conſtantly preſerved them from the firſt Stirrings of an Inclination to Apoſtacy, as they had never heard of ſuch a Thing in all the Syſtem, or felt any Tendency of Heart that Way, his Interpoſition muſt have been undiſcerned by them; nor could they have come to the Knowledge of it, unleſs by immediate Revelation from God; which, as the Caſe ſtood, they were unprepared to underſtand, or attend to, as not feeling any Need of it. A Revelation in ſuch a Situation would not have produced the deſired Effects. Nothing could teach them like Experience. And indeed this is evidently the Caſe ſo univerſally, that it is even become a Proverb, that *Experience is the beſt School-Maſter.*—So that it ſeems plain, that Intelligences, as they were at firſt created, were not in proper Circumſtances to be confirmed: nor could God have confirmed them, with that Honour to himſelf that was deſirable and fit.

FOR, if God, the only immutable Being, of his own infinite Goodneſs and ſovereign Grace, ſhou[ld]

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ſhew ſuch a Kindneſs to any of his Creatures, it was fit and deſirable, that they ſhould be thoroughly ſenſible of the Greatneſs and Freeneſs of his Grace. The Kindneſs done to a mutable, peccable Creature in ſuch a Caſe, as to the Matter of it, muſt be of infinite Worth: it being a Confirmation in everlaſting Happineſs. And as the Kindneſs in confirming a peccable Creature, muſt be infinitely great, ſo the Grace muſt be abſolutely free. God had done ſo much for all Intelligences in their firſt Creation, that he was under no Obligations to do any more. He was abſolutely at Liberty. He looked upon it in this Light. And had he, to what he had originally done for them as their Creator, ſuper-added confirming Grace, *i. e.* undertaken, as their Guardian, to have been their conſtant Keeper, and engaged his own Immutability to have render'd them immutably good, the Favour had been quite over and above what was due from the Creator to his Creature; and ſo, had been in a peculiar Senſe *free*. Now for a Favour, *infinitely great*, and ſo *abſolutely free*, to be conferred in ſuch a Manner, as that the *Greatneſs* and *Freeneſs* of it ſhould never have been ſeen by Intelligences, was neither for the Honour of God, nor for the beſt Good of his Creatures. And,

5. IT was but paying proper Honour to the Deity, for God, as moral Governor of the World, to take State to himſelf, and in the Sight of all created Intelligences, to ſeat himſelf upon his Throne, and proclaim his own infinite Supremacy, and cloath himſelf with his proper Authority, and let all know their infinite Obligations to love, and honour and obey Him, on Pain of his everlaſting Diſpleaſure, and their everlaſting Baniſhment from his glorious Preſence.—— To have concerned himſelf only for his Creature's Good, unſolicitous for the Rights of the God-head, in the very Beginning of his Reign,

and when the first Foundations of his everlasting Kingdom were laying, had been to counteract his own Nature, and his chief Maxims of Government. And indeed, as he is the GREAT BEING, and in a Sense the only Being, all the Creation being nothing compared with him, yea, less than nothing and Vanity; So it was fit, all Intelligences should early be taught to view him in that Light. And what Method could be better suited to this End, than to let all the intelligent System know, that their everlasting Welfare was suspended on the Condition of their paying supreme Honour, and yielding constant Obedience to this glorious Monarch of the Universe: in the mean Time leaving them to their own Reflections, and to their own Choice; as being conscious to himself of their infinite Obligations to yield everlasting Obedience to his Law?

AND if, in this State of Things, any of his Creatures should venture to rise in Rebellion against his glorious Majesty, the Way would be open for him to take such Steps as would have the most effectual Tendency to discountenance Sin, to exalt God, to humble the Sinner, and glorify Grace; and to prepare the Way for the Confirmation of innumerable Multitudes of Intelligences, in Holiness and Happiness, to the best Advantage.——All his gracious Plan lay open before him. He knew, from Step to Step, how Intelligences would conduct, and how he himself would interpose and over-rule, and how the Whole would finally issue. And he practically said, "Now shall it be known, what is in their Hearts. "And Occasion shall be given to shew, what is in "my Heart. And it shall be known, that I am the "LORD. And the whole intelligent System shall "be filled with my Glory." And,

6. THE State of Things in the moral System was not such, immediately after the Creation, as was suitable

table to the Confirmation of Intelligences, in a Way agreable to the Ends of moral Government. God must have done all *immediately*, and *without their so much as discerning their Need of it*. For there were as yet, comparatively speaking, no Means of Confirmation. They had not had Opportunity, in any Instance, to see the infinitely evil Nature and dreadful Consequences of Sin. Nor did it yet appear what infinite Abhorrence the Almighty had of Iniquity, by any Thing he had *done*. Nor did they so much as know their Danger, and their Need of the divine Interposition. Things, therefore, were by no Means ripe for a general Confirmation.

INDEED God could have confirmed created Intelligences then, but not in a Way so agreable to the Ends of moral Government, as afterwards, *i. e.* not so much to the Honour of the moral Governor, and to the spiritual Advantage of his Creatures.—— When Satan, a glorious Arch-Angel, revolted, and drew off a third Part (perhaps) of the Inhabitants of Heaven; and when, for their Sin, they were driven out from the Presence of God, down to an eternal Hell: and when the elect Angels had stood by, and with a perfect Astonishment beheld this unexpected Revolt of their Companions; and with sacred Dread seen divine Wrath blaze out from the eternal Throne of Heaven's almighty Monarch, driving the Rebel-Host from those celestial Regions, down to Darkness and endless Woes: and when the elect Angels, soon after, saw our first Parents turn away from God, and for their Sin driven out of Paradise, and all this lower World doomed to Death: and when they had stood by 3 or 4000 Years, and been Spectators of the Judgments inflicted by God on a wicked World, seen the general Deluge, the miraculous Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrha by Fire from Heaven, the ten Plagues of Egypt, the Over-

throw of Pharaoh and his Hoſt in the Red-Sea, the Carcaſes of ſix hundred Thouſand Iſraelites fall in the Wilderneſs, and the long Series of Calamities which God ſent upon his People in the Times of their Judges, and in the Reigns of their Kings, till Iſrael and Judah were both carried away captive for their Sins, and the glorious holy Temple laid in Aſhes: and viewed all God's Ways, even down to the Birth and Death of the MESSIAH, the moſt aſtoniſhing Event that ever did, or ever will happen, thro'out eternal Ages; and beheld their ſovereign Lord, who in the Beginning had created the Heaven and the Earth, and whom, from their firſt Exiſtence, they had worſhipped as the ſupreme God, as God over
k all bleſſed for ever, even him ſtepping into the Room of apoſtate Man, and dying in his Stead to make Atonement for his Sin: I ſay, when the elect Angels had ſtood by for 4000 Years, and ſeen all theſe Things, and had full Time for Conſideration; their Thoughts of God, of themſelves, of Sin, would be almoſt infinitely different from what they were immediately after their Creation. And now, if God ſhould ſee Cauſe to confirm them, that they might never fall, it would appear to them, a Kindneſs quite infinitely great, and infinitely free. Their abſolute Dependence on God, and infinite Obligations to him, and the infinite Malignity of Sin, would naturally be ſo deeply impreſſed on their Hearts, by an attentive View of all theſe Things, as would greatly tend to their everlaſting Confirmation; and prepare them to receive, with ſuitable Gratitude, a Kindneſs of ſuch infinite Value, at the Hands of God.

THE Fall of their Companions in Holineſs and Happineſs, and then of innocent Man, would naturally lead them to ſee their own Mutability, and make them feel their Need of being held up by him, who is alone by Nature unchangeable, and bring them to an abſolute

absolute Dependence on him. God's permitting others to fall, as great and good as themselves, would naturally lead them to see, that God was under no Obligations to keep them through their Time of Trial: which would induce them to have Recourse to sovereign Grace, and be always on their Watch. A Sight of the infinitely dreadful State of Satan and his Host, once their Fellow-Citizens, now bound in Chains of Guilt and Despair, to the Judgment of the great Day, then before all Worlds to be bro't forth, judged, condemned and doomed to the most intolerable Pains of Hell, never to end; would naturally tend to realize to them the horrible Wickedness and dreadful Nature of rising in Rebellion against God, and make them tremble at the Tho't. And while they beheld all God's Conduct towards Mankind, from the Fall of Adam, to the Death, Resurrection and Exaltation of Christ, and looked forward to the final Conflagration, and Consummation of all Things, it would give them such a View of all God's moral Perfections, shining forth in his moral Government of the World, and set the infinitely evil Nature and dreadful Consequences of Sin in such a Light, as would have the strongest Tendency to confirm them in everlasting Love and Obedience to the supreme Being, and dispose them to receive at God's Hands a Promise of their everlasting Establishment, with the utmost Gratitude.

THE Angels, who stood, being no where in Scripture denominated ELECT, until after the Exaltation of Christ, some have thought they were held in a State of Trial till then; when by their Confirmation, God's eternal Designs of Love towards them were manifested. And it is certain, that when they had been Spectators of all God's Works in Heaven, Earth and Hell, thro' so long a Period, they must be in almost an infinitely better Capacity to receive

Confirmation, than immediately after their Creation. And their Confirmation now would be infinitely more to God's Honour, than if it had been granted at their first Existence; and their own Humility, Holiness and Happiness be increased an Hundred, or a Thousand, or perhaps ten Thousand fold.

Therefore,

7. ON Supposition that a third Part were fallen and lost, yet it is easy to see how there may be eternally more Holiness and Happiness in the angelic World, than if Sin and Misery had been for ever unknown. For if their Holiness and Happiness be only an Hundred Times greater now, on the present Plan, than otherwise it would have been, and if we allow for the Happiness Satan and his Adherents lost, and for the Misery which they undergo, yet what remains must be many Millions more in the whole, than it otherwise would have been. * And only let us realize what must have been

* The Truth of this may be easily seen, thus—Suppose the Number of Angels to be 3.—and all remaining innocent to have one Degree of Holiness and Happiness a-piece; the Sum total would be 3 Degrees of Holiness and Happiness.—But if one falls, and the other two increase in Holiness and Happiness an hundred Fold, then the Sum total of Holiness and Happiness will be 200 Degrees—But if the Misery of the Damned is augmented in the same Proportion as the Happiness of the Blessed, then the Misery of one lost Angel will be 100 Degrees—besides the Happiness he lost, which was supposed to be 1 Degree—Now therefore subtract 101, from 200, and the Remainder will be 99; that is, there will be 99 Degrees of Happiness left.—And if this will be the Case, were the Number of the Angels supposed to be 3, it will also proportionably in any given Number—So that if there are but half so many good Angels, as there are now supposed

been the Reflections of the holy Angels, from Time to Time, as new Scenes have opened to their View, and what their Reflections must eternally be, when they have seen God's grand Plan finished at the Day of Judgment; and we cannot doubt but that their Humility, Holiness and Happiness will be augmented at least an Hundred fold.

1. REFLECTIONS of the elect Angels on the unreasonable Rebellion, the unexpected Fall, the everlasting Punishment of Satan and his Legions, once their Companions in Bliss.

"How art thou fallen, O Lucifer, Son of the "Morning! From standing near the Throne of "God, into an eternal Hell! Yesterday joining with "us in the Songs of Heaven; now under the ever-"lasting Displeasure of God, banished to endless "Woe!" "How

supposed to be of Mankind inhabiting the Earth, yet the clear Gain will be above 96 Hundred Millions of Degrees of Happiness, more than if all had stood: as will appear from the following Table.

N. B. The Number of the present Inhabitants of the Earth is supposed to be 729 Millions——I will suppose the Number of good Angels to be only 300 Millions, which is less than Half.

If all had stood.		On the present Plan.	
Number of Angels supposed.	Proportionable Degrees of Happiness.	Number of Angels supposed.	Proportionable Degrees of Happiness.
3 - - -	3 - -	3 - - -	99 - -
30 - - -	30 - -	30 - - -	990 - -
300 - - -	300 - -	300 - - -	9900 - -
300 Millions	300 Millions	300 Millions	9900 Millions
		From	9900 Millions
		subtract	300 Millions
		Remainder	9600 Millions Clear Gain

" How durſt you riſe in Rebellion againſt Hea-
" ven's glorious Monarch! And how infinitely
" vile the ſhocking Deed! What more reaſonable
" than to pay ſupremeHonour to the ſupremeBeing,
" and to be in Subjection to the Author and Lord
" of all Things, to whom the Throne belongs,
" and exult in his Supremacy, and rejoice in Him
" and in his Government! Or what more vile and
" ungrateful, than to turn Enemies to the great
" Being, the Author, Proprietor and Governor of
" all created Intelligences, and to attempt to over-
" turn all Order and Harmony in the Syſtem!—
" For ſuch exalted Intelligences, in ſuch a happy
" Situation, under ſuch great Obligations to the
" Deity for Bounties already received, attended with
" the Proſpect of endleſs Joys in his Preſence, to
" riſe in Rebellion thus! No wonder, Heaven's
" almighty Monarch, in Regard to his ownHonour
" and the Good of his Kingdom, has baniſhed
" them from his Preſence, and deſtined them to be
" everlaſting Monuments of his Wrath.

" BUT, Oh how unexpected, ſurpriſing and
" ſhocking are theſe dreadful Scenes! And is it ſo?
" And are they fallen? Who could have thought
" it!—Such holyBeings, to riſe in Rebellion againſt
" INFINITE HOLINESS!—So good a Taſte forOrder
" and Harmony, and yet have broke the Orders
" of Heaven! So ſtrong Inducements, from Duty
" and Intereſt to perſevere, that one would have
" thought ſuch an Apoſtacy quite impoſſible! And
" are they fallen? For ever fallen and loſt!"

" AND what are we! Were we better than they?
" Or did we ſtand firmer? Or were we more out
" of Danger? Or more on our Watch? No, in
" no wiſe.—It once ſeemed impoſſible we ſhould fall.
" But now we are ſurpriſed to ſee we ſtand.—And,
" Oh who knows what another Day may bring
" forth!—

" forth !—We are as likely to be in Hell to-mor-
" row, as they were Yesterday !—God is no more
" obliged to keep us, than he was them.—And
" what if we should fall ! Oh how dreadful, how
" infinitely dreadful the Thought !—We will all
" go and fall prostrate before the Throne of the
" great IMMUTABLE ; and cry, *O Father of our*
" *Spirits, of thy sovereign Grace, keep us, we humbly*
" *pray thee.*——Nor will we ever forget what we
" have seen. Nor will we ever cease to watch and
" pray."

2. REFLECTIONS of the Elect Angels on the Temptation of Satan, and Fall of Man.

" OH the hellish Pride and Spite and Malice of
" Satan, once our Companion in Bliss ! How gladly
" would he ruin the whole System, were it in his
" Power, and even overturn the Throne of Hea-
" ven's eternal King !—How wicked a Deed hath
" Man committed ! and how righteous the Doom
" of our glorious Monarch ! All who rebel against
" him, deserve to be turned out of his World,
" and lie under his everlasting Displeasure.——
" But what an infinite Weight of Vengeance
" doth Satan deserve ! We rejoice, the Almigh-
" ty hath decreed to bruise his Head, and frus-
" trate all his Schemes, and bring Salvation to Man.
" We rejoice, that the Lord God omnipotent reign-
" eth, and will for ever reign.

" *OH* THOU, *who only art immutable, behold, Man*
" *is fallen ! We prostrate ourselves at thy Feet. O keep*
" *us, of thy mere sovereign Goodness, we most earnestly*
" *and humbly do beseech thee ! We claim no Right to such*
" *a Favour. Our fellow-Creatures in Heaven, and now*
" *on Earth, are fallen. Thy Throne is guiltless. But,*
" *O thou Father of Spirits, keep us, of thy mere sovereign*
" *Grace, thro' our State of Trial, to the everlasting Ho-*
" *nour of thy great Name : that, thro' eternal Ages, we*

" *may*

" *may celebrate thy Praiſes.—In the Revelation of thy* " *Deſigns of Mercy towards fallen Man, we ſee the* " *infinite Goodneſs of thy Nature, and that thou canſt* " *have Mercy on whom thou wilt have Mercy, and at* " *the ſame Time ſecure the Honour of thy Government.* " *We flee to thy ſovereign Goodneſs for preſerving Grace,* " *nor will we ever forget what we have ſeen, nor will* " *we ceaſe to watch and pray.*"

3. REFLECTIONS of the elect Angels on the Death of Chriſt.—Attentive Spectators on this ſolemn Occaſion, no doubt, altho' inviſible to the ſurrounding, inſulting Multitude.

" THIS is he, who brought the Univerſe into Ex-" iſtence, and is worſhipped by all the Hoſts of " Heaven! This is he, who appeared to Abraham " and to Moſes, gave the Law on Mount Sinai, and " dwelt in the Jewiſh Temple; then in the Form " of God, now in the Form of a Servant: *Jeſus of* " *Nazareth, the King of the Jews!* And this gives us " higher Conceptions of the divine Goodneſs, than " ever before entered into our Hearts. That after " Mankind had continued 4000 Years in obſtinate " Rebellion, and given Millions of Inſtances of an " inveterate Enemity againſt our almighty Sove-" reign, yet he can thus freely give his Son " to die for them!—But, Oh the Helliſh Temper of " the ſurrounding Crouds, inſulting the Son of God " in his laſt Agonies! Puſhed on by Satan, who " knows what they are doing, altho' they do not. " And thus Satan will treat the God who made him: " This is his Heart. Oh what is there he would " not do, had he Power on his Side! No Wonder " he is doomed to eternal Woes. Hell is his pro-" per Place.—And ſuch might we now have been, " if God had left us to fall when they did. Oh the " ſovereign Grace of God to us! Preſerved to this " Day in our Integrity! Oh the dreadful Nature of " Sin!

" Sin ! Oh the ruined State of a guilty World, ſe-
" duced by Satan, ſhould Juſtice take Place ! But
" here hangs their expiatory Sacrifice : the Son of
" God dying in their Room ! The whole intelli-
" gent Syſtem now ſees how God hates Sin : and
" how reſolved he is, as Governour of the Univerſe,
" to bear ample Teſtimony againſt it. Not one of
" the guilty Race of Adam will he pardon, unleſs
" his Son die in their Stead. The Greatneſs of the
" Atonement ſhews how great He thinks the
" Crime. If all the angelic World had been offer-
" ed as a Sacrifice of Atonement, it had been infi-
" nitely beneath this. Yea, compared with this, it
" had been Nothing, and leſs than Nothing and Va-
" nity. Oh the infinite Evil of Sin ! O the infinite
" Greatneſs of God ! How does the Death of his
" Son ſhew him to be infinitely exalted ! None
" fit to mediate between Him and ſinful Men, but
" his Son ! Nor any Blood precious enough to
" make Atonement but his !—Nor can Satan, un-
" der all his Woes, thro' eternal Ages, ever once
" think, that he is puniſhed in a ſovereign, deſpo-
" tic, arbitrary Manner : much leſs can ſuch a
" Thought ever enter into our Hearts in Heaven,
" while we behold the Lamb in the midſt of the
" Throne, and remember how he was treated by
" his Father, when once he ſtood in the Room of
" Sinners. Nay, now we are more fully convinced
" than ever, that Sin really deſerves the eternal
" Puniſhment, which God will inflict. Oh the
" infinite Evil of riſing in Rebellion againſt the in-
" finitely glorious and almighty Monarch of the
" Univerſe, the Maker and Lord of all ! Oh what
" an infinite Kindneſs, that God has kept us from
" this infinite Evil ! Our Obligations to him, how
" are they infinitely increaſed ! And after all this,
" for us ever to turn Apoſtates, Oh how unutterably

" dreadful,

" dreadful, quite infinitely dreadful the Thought!
" ——If when the Son of God arises from the
" Dead, ascends to Heaven, and sits down on the
" right Hand of the Majesty on high, and becomes
" Head over all the Saved from among Men, in
" whom they will be for ever safe, whose Immu-
" tability will render them immutable in Good-
" ness forever, O if he might become our Head too!
" How infinitely great would be the Favour of
" God in this, nor should we ever forget the Free-
" ness of God's Grace." *

4. REFLECTIONS

* AND if on the Exaltation of Christ, the Elect Angels were confirmed, it is easy to see, how they would naturally be a Thousand (if not a Million) Times more sensible of the Greatness and Freeness of the Goodness and Grace of God exercised towards them, than if they and all others had been immediately confirmed at their first Existence.——That Christ is to be Head of Angels, as well as of Saints, seems to be intimated in *Eph.* I. 10. *That in the Dispensation of the Fulness of Times, he might gather together in one all Things in Christ, both which are in Heaven, and which are on Earth, even in him.* And perhaps the Confirmation of the Elect Angels is what the Apostle refers to in *Col.* I. 19, 20. *For it pleased the Father, that in him all Fulness should dwell, and by him to reconcile all Things to himself, by him, I say, whether they be Things in Earth, or Things in Heaven.*—— And 'tis certain, that they receive great Instruction from God's Works here on Earth. They behold *the whole Earth full of the Glory of the Lord, Isai.* VI. 3. And 'tis certain, God designed they should. And that he has ordered Things as he has, to the Intent, *that unto Principalities and Powers in heavenly Places might be known by the Church the manifold Wisdom of God. Eph.* III. 10. And 'tis equally certain, they are very attentive. For these are Things, which *the Angels desire to look into.* 1 *Pet.* I. 12. And they have the best Advantages

for

4. REFLECTIONS of the elect Angels on the Destruction of Antichrist, and on the Millennium.

" Now at Length an End is come to the long " Series of Mischief, which hath been wrought by " that furious Dragon, that subtle old Serpent, once " a glorious Angel, now of a long Time a Devil. " Behold, he is bound, and shut up, and can deceive " the Nations no more! Behold, Babylon the Great " is fallen, is fallen! Hallelujah! Salvation and " Glory, and Honour, and Power, unto the Lord " our God; for true and righteous are his Judg- " ments. Hallelujah! for the Lord God omnipo- " tent reigneth. And, lo, all his Foes fall before " him, unable to resist: and the Marriage of the " Lamb is come, and his Wife hath made herself " ready. And now Christ shall reign on Earth a " thousand Years, and all Nations shall serve him, " and all the People shall be holy, and all shall " know him, from the least to the greatest, and the " Earth shall be full of the Knowledge of the Lord, " as the Waters fill the Seas, till the saved of the " Lord be as the Stars of Heaven, and as the Sand " on the Sea-Shore, innumerable. Hallelujah!

" THIS grand Event, which to Satan is Matter " of so great Confusion and Anguish, is to us " Matter of the greatest Joy. And yet once Satan " and his Hosts were all of our Number, and we " sang the Praises of God together.—Oh the sur-

for a large Acquaintance with these Things, as *they are ministring Spirits sent forth to minister to those who shall be Heirs of Salvation. Heb.* I. 14. And they deeply interest themselves in all God's Dispensations towards the Church on Earth, as is evident from the Book of the *Revelation* thro'out.—And they will attend Jesus Christ when he comes to judge the World, and see God's grand Plan finished, and Things in God's Kingdom brought to a final Settlement. *Matt.* XXV. 31,——46.

" prizing Change Sin hath wrought !—Oh the dif-
" tinguiſhing Grace of God, which kept us from
" falling too, on that dreadful Day of Satan's Re-
" volt ! A Day by us never to be forgotten.—Now
" Satan lies chained in the bottomleſs Pit. And
" we are in Triumph, on the Occaſion, around the
" Throne."

5. ON Chriſt's ſecond Coming.—" Behold, he
" cometh in the Clouds of Heaven, and every Eye
" ſhall ſee him, and they that pierced him ſhall
" mourn; and the bold and haughty, who once
" bid him Defiance, ſhall call to the Mountains and
" Rocks to fall on them and cover them; the Cruſh
" of Mountains being leſs dreadful, than the Wrath
" of the Lamb. And now ſhall the Scene cloſe,
" and the Ways of God to Men and Angels be all
" juſtified: And God ſhall receive Glory from all
" his Works.

" SEE, yonder cometh Satan, with all his guilty
" Hoſt, trembling, to appear before the Bar.—Oh
" never let us forget the Day, when they ſang the
" Praiſes of God with us before the Throne ! How
" ſurpriſed were we at their unexpected Revolt !
" We then little tho't what was before us: little
" gueſſed what was in the Creature's Heart, or in
" God's Heart. But now we have ſeen both:
" And now we ſee the Reſult. God is exalted, his
" Authority eſtabliſhed; Satan and his Hoſt are
" conquered, and are now to be ſent away into
" everlaſting Puniſhment.—And, but for the diſtin-
" guiſhing Grace of God, which has always held
" us up, we might now have been as they now are.
" No Heart can conceive, no Tongue can ex-
" preſs, the infinite Obligations we are under to
" God. Of whom, and by whom, and to whom
" are all Things: to whom belongs Glory for ever
" and ever. Amen.

" Now

" Now, therefore, let eternal Ages be by us all " employed in contemplating God's glorious " Works, in admiring the Wiſdom of all his Ways, " revering the dread Majeſty of the Univerſe, mag- " nifying and extolling his great Name, exulting " in his Supremacy, and celebrating the Praiſes of " his free and boundleſs Goodneſs."

IT is eaſy to ſee, how natural it muſt be for the Elect Angels to make theſe and ſuch-like Reflections on theſe Occaſions. And it is as eaſy to ſee how the Knowledge of God and of themſelves increaſes their Humility, their Dependence on God, their Reverence, Love, Gratitude, and Joy, *i. e.* their Holineſs and Happineſs. And it is eaſy to ſee, how the Fall of Angels and Men, and God's Conduct on theſe Occaſions, gives them theſe new Idea's of themſelves and of God. Had Sin and Miſery never entered into God's World, they could never have had theſe Idea's of themſelves, or of God.——And if what has been ſaid of the Angels, may be applied to Mankind, as for Subſtance we ſee it may, and that too with ſome additional Circumſtances of great Weight, as will appear in the next *Sermon*, then this will be the Sum of the Argument—

So clear and ſo adequate an Idea of God and themſelves could not have been obtained by finite Intelligences, thro' eternal Ages, had Sin and Miſery never entered into God's World.

BUT the more clear and adequate their Idea of God and themſelves, the more humble, holy and happy will the Inhabitants of Heaven be, and the more will God be exalted.—And that, in ſuch a ſuperior Degree, as that more Honour will redound to God, and more Humility, Holineſs and Happineſs be in the Syſtem, than if Sin and Miſery had been forever unknown.

Now, if God's present Plan is in the best Manner suited to honour God, and to increase the Humility, Holiness and Happiness of the System, then is his Wisdom vindicated.—For Wisdom consists in proposing the best Ends, and choosing the best Means for their Accomplishment.—And thus God's Conduct in his grand Plan is analogous to his Conduct in the *four Instances* mentioned in the *first Sermon:* and the same Reasons which vindicate his Wisdom in them, vindicate him in this.

SERMON

The WISDOM of God in the Permiſſion of SIN.

SERMON IV.

GENESIS L. 20.

——YE thought Evil againſt Me; but God meant it unto Good——

IF the holy Scriptures are read over, and viewed in the Character of a *Narrative*, we ſhall find the *Hiſtory of the Deity*, and the *Hiſtory of human Nature* interwoven throughout, from the Beginning of *Geneſis* to the End of the *Revelation*, filling up by far the greateſt Part of thoſe ſacred Pages. Here we ſhall ſee the bright and glorious Character of the Deity, drawn in a moſt lively and ſtriking Manner, in an authentic Account, written by God's own Direction, of his Conduct from the Beginning of the World: And at the ſame Time, human Nature painted to the Life, in the Behaviour of Mankind, thro' a long Succeſſion of Ages.——And this Book God puts into our Hands, as the beſt Means to form us to Views and Tempers ſuitable to the heavenly World.—And why?—Why ſuch a Book, for

such an END?—Plainly, because the Knowledge of God and of our selves is of the last Importance to the Holiness and Happiness of that World ——And indeed, on our strictest Researches into Things, we shall find, that our highest moral Rectitude, Perfection and Happiness, must arise from, and consist in an enlarged, clear, lively View of God and our selves, and an answerable Frame of Heart. Let us view God as he is, and ourselves as we be, as nearly in the same Light that God does, as our finite Capacities will admit, and have an answerable Frame of Heart; and we are at the Top of that moral Perfection and Happiness we are capable of.——And if therefore God's great and universal Plan is so contrived, as to put Intelligences under the best possible Advantages for this, then it is the best Plan possible. We have before entered on this glorious Theme. And let these Things be now considered, for the further Illustration of the Subject.

1. NOTHING can be known of God, by created Intelligences, be their Taste for divine Knowledge ever so good, and their Capacities ever so great, any further than God manifests himself. For it is beyond the Power of any finite Intelligence to look immediately into God's Heart, as we can into our own, and view and contemplate the divine Perfections as they are in the divine Essence. Yea, we can have no Idea at all of the divine Essence. Yea, we can have no Idea even of the Essence of our own Souls. The utmost we can do, by Way of immediate Intuition, is to perceive our Thoughts, and thence discern the habitual Inclinations of our Hearts. And if we could look into God's Essence, and see all his Thoughts, we might thence learn his Nature, without any Manifestation whatsoever. We might know God's Heart, by immediate Intuition, as we can our own. But this is absolutely

impossible

impoſſible. We cannot look into the Hearts of our FellowCreatures: much leſs can we into God's Heart. Neither God's Thoughts, nor any of his Views, nor any of his Deſigns could ever have been known, had he given no Manner of Manifeſtation of himſelf. Thoſe Thoughts and Purpoſes in his Heart which he has not manifeſted, cannot be found out. Greatneſs of Genius is no Help in this Caſe. Sir *Iſaac Newton* could not tell when the Day of Judgment would be, ſooner than the greateſt Idiot. Yea, as God had not revealed it, ſo *of that Day and Hour knew no Man; no, not the Angels, neither the Son, but the Father only.* *Mar.* XII. 32. Even the Man Chriſt Jeſus, now in his exalted State in Heaven, cannot look into the divine Eſſence, and ſee the ſecret Thoughts in God's Heart. If he comes to the Knowledge of theſe Secrets, it is by divine Communication: as is plain from *Rev.* I. 1. *The Revelation of Jeſus Chriſt, which God* GAVE *unto Him.* And if the moſt exalted Creature, by immediate Intuition, cannot look into God's Heart, ſo much as to diſcern *one ſingle Thought*, then nothing can be known of God this Way.—In a Word, neither the Being of God, nor more nor leſs of any of his Perfections, could ever have been known, had there been abſolutely no Evidence at all of his Being, or of any of his Perfections: but no Evidence ever was had, or ever can be had in this Caſe, but what originally comes from him: therefore nothing can be known of God, any further than he, ſome how or other, makes it evident to his Creatures. Which is what I mean, by his manifeſting himſelf. Therefore,

2. As all the Idea's of God, which are according to Truth, in the whole intelligent Syſtem, originally flow from the Manifeſtation which he makes of himſelf; ſo the more *clearly* and *fully* he manifeſts himſelf, the greater Advantages will there eternally

be, to make swift Progress in Knowledge, Humility, Holiness and Happiness. Intelligences, who are finite, can never have an adequate Idea of him who is infinite. Their Knowledge may increase, and their Views brighten eternally. And the greater their Advantages are, the swifter will be their Progress; supposing their Taste for divine Knowledge to be good. He that is now the lowest, may, Millions of Ages hence, be much higher in Attainments, than he that is now the highest, among all the heavenly Hosts. Mean while, those glorious CHIEFS may be still advanced, almost infinitely, before them. But while all Ranks in Heaven are thus rising in the Knowledge of God, and in all divine Attainments, eternally rising; yet they can never comprehend him who is absolutely INFINITE. He is still infinitely above them: and they are as Nothing and Vanity, compared with him. Their Conviction of this will eternally increase: and so their Humility eternally grow: and God be for ever exalted higher and higher in their View. Which will cause their Love to his glorious Majesty, Joy in his Supremacy, and Happiness in him and in his Government, for ever to augment.——And if their Progress will be in Proportion to their Advantages, i. e. in Proportion to the Manifestations God makes of himself, then the fuller and brighter the divine Manifestations, the swifter their Progress.—Of two Intelligences, of equal Taste and Capacity, it is possible, that one, by having a thousand Times greater Advantages, may make a thousand Times greater Proficiency than the other, in the same Time.——Let an Intelligence, of equal Taste and Capacity with the Angel Gabriel, be created on the Morning of the Day of Judgment, and be placed in some remote Parts of infinite Space, at a Distance from the whole present Creation, and spend that Day in solitary Contemplation,

plation, without any Advantage to gain the Knowledge of God, but what must necessarily result from its own Existence and Powers; and let Gabriel the same Day descend from Heaven with Christ, and be a Spectator of all the Transactions of that solemn Season; and it is easy to see, that Gabriel must gain a Thousand, or ten Thousand, or rather perhaps a Million Times more Knowledge of the Nature of God, the moral Governor of the World, than that solitary Spirit.—So Moses, in about six Months (viz. from the Time he saw the burning Bush, to the End of the twice forty Days he was on Mount Sinai) doubtless gained more Knowledge of God, than he had all his Life long before, i. e. more in six Months, than in eighty Years.

As God has formed finite Intelligences capable of Improvements thro' eternal Ages; so it is reasonable to expect, that he will provide those who shall be the Objects of his everlasting Favour, with the best Advantages to make a swift Progress. And that Plan will in this Respect be judged the best, that is most suited to this End. That Plan, therefore, of all possible Plans, must in this Respect be the best, in which is given the fullest and the brightest Manifestation of all the divine Perfections.

But,

3. THE Apostacy of Angels and Men has given the moral Governor of the Universe an Opportunity to set all his moral Perfections in the clearest and most striking Point of Light; and, as it were, to open all his Heart, to the View of finite Intelligences.

THE whole intelligent System now may see, what God thinks to be his Due from his Creatures, and how jealous he is of the Rights of the Godhead, and how resolved to maintain the Honour of his Authority and Government.—And now the whole System may see too, that, as he is God of Gods,

and

and Lord of Lords, the original Proprietor of all Things, so he thinks it belongs to him, without the Advice or Leave of his Creatures, according to the Counsel of his own Will, to lay out that Plan which seems best in his own Eyes; and to do what he thinks best to do; and to forbear what he thinks best to forbear; to bring such Intelligences into Being as he thinks best; and having said and done what he thinks best, to forbear to say or do any more, and stand by and let them take their Course: practically saying, "They owe themselves to me: I "owe them nothing." And if they fall, he holds himself at Liberty to proceed with, and punish them strictly according to Law, without any Mitigation, the Law being exactly right: so that it is Matter of mere sovereign Grace, to grant Relief to any; a Thing he may do, or not do, as he pleases, for aught he owes to them. Yea, he holds himself bound to do nothing for their Relief, but in a Way that shall be honourable to his Law.——Nevertheless, while he shews such a steady Regard to his own Honour, and so inflexibly adheres to the Rights of the Godhead, as by Office he is bound, being moral Governor of the Universe; at the same Time, the whole System may see too, that his Goodness is as boundless as his Nature. But then he loves his Creatures should know how the Case really stands; that the Rights of the Godhead ought not to be given up, and that the Exercises of his Goodness are absolutely free: That while they view Things in the same Light he does, they may feel, as he thinks it is fit they should, in such a Case.*——

But

* UNLESS Property be known and acknowledged between Man and Man, and the Boundaries fixed, there can be no Room for the Exercise of Generosity If my Estate is none of mine, then it is not mine to give. If my Neighbour may

But Time would fail, to hint at the various Idea's of himself, which he has communicated in Consequence of the grand Apostacy of Angels and Men. Indeed, he has given Materials for Contemplation, that an whole Eternity cannot exhaust.

THE Picture of himself, which God has given and will give, in his Conduct, from the Fall of Angels, to the final Consummation of all Things, is gloriously full and compleat. He has been called to act in an infinite

may come and take, what, and when, he pleases; then I have no Right to withhold any Thing. My Neighbour may justly think hardly of me, if I do: And will not thank me, if I do not.——But if I have any Thing, which I may call my own, and to which my Neighbour has no Right, then he must acknowledge, notwithstanding any Claim he has to make, I may do what I will with that. As the *Housholder* in the Parable (*Mat.* XX. 15.) said, *It is not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?* —And if my Neighbour views my Property in the same Light that I do, then he will be apt to view my Generosity in the same Light too. And what I offer as a free Gift, he will receive and acknowledge as such: and feel as is fit.——And it was absolutely necessary, that Property should be known and acknowledged, and the Boundaries fixed between God and his Creatures. And God, by the Law he gave to his Creatures, as soon as created, and by his Conduct since, has effectually done it: Has plainly said, what was due from them to him: and as plainly declared, that he owed them nothing.——And these Boundaries, set up by God, were they but acceded to, and acquiesced in by Man, the chief Matters of Controversy between God and Man would be removed, and Things would look fair for a Reconciliation: But while Man denies his Debt to God, and makes large Demands on the Deity, there is no Hope of an Accommodation. For God will demolish the Universe, sooner than give up his just Rights, in Favour of his rebellious Creatures. *Mat.* V. 17.

nite Variety of Cases; and, to speak of him according to the Language of Scripture, in the most trying Circumstances, (Read *Ezek.* XX. 5,—22.) he has been tempted and tried, not merely 40 Years in the Wilderness by the Israelites; but from the Beginning of the World to this Day, by every Nation, Kindred, Language and Tongue. And has had Opportunity to shew his Heart, by his Conduct, in all the infinite Variety of Cases which have ever happened, among the Millions, and Millions of Millions of Subjects, which he had to deal with. All which, together with all that remains to be accomplished to the End of the World, will be brought into View another Day, and serve to make the Picture of himself, which he has given, very full and gloriously compleat, in the Eyes of all holy Intelligences.

BESIDES, his GREAT WORK, to which all his other Works bear some Respect, is so much like himself, that, in a Manner, it gives his whole Picture at once.——An *incarnate God on the Cross*, if the divine Views, Motives and Ends are all considered, is a Piece of Conduct, of which it may be said, as it was of him that was chief Actor in this Affair—It is *the Brightness of God's Glory, and the express Image of his Person.* To create a World, was but a small Matter with the ALMIGHTY. With a Word he could bring System after System into Being, with infinite Ease. But the Work of Redemption by the Death of his SON, seems to be a Work equal with himself, and in which he has expressed all his Heart.*

ACTIONS

* THE Scripture informs us of no created Intelligence, besides Angels and Men: much less does it attempt to raise our Devotion by a Contemplation of Millions of Globes inhabited besides this our Earth. But according to Scripture, the Work of Redemption is God's great Work; and from *this*, chiefly, we are to learn his moral Character; and

this

ACTIONS speak louder than Words. The divine Conduct sets his Picture in a more striking, affecting Point of Light, than any mere verbal Descriptions could have done, had there been no Opportunity for Conduct. When the ALMIGHTY actually banished the sinning Angels, from his Presence, down to eternal Darkness and Woe, it set his Character in a much stronger Light, in the Eyes of the Elect Angels, than his previous Threatning had done. And when the Day of Judgment actually comes, and the whole System are assembled to see and hear, and give up their Account, and receive their Sentence, it will be much more real than ever it was before made to any of God's Creatures, by any Descriptions, or Imaginations they ever had. And it will set the divine Perfections in a Light proportionably clear, striking and affecting.

HAD all Things gone on still and quiet in God's Kingdom, there had been no Occasion or Opportunity for these Works, by which all will *know that he is the* LORD, and the whole System *be filled with his Glory.*

HAD the Posterity of Abraham lived quietly in the Land of Canaan, & multiplied there, for 470 Years, the Canaanites dying off mean while, as the Indians do in America, they might have filled the Land with a much greater Number of Inhabitants, than

 when

this are we to contemplate, with the other Branches of his moral Government, as revealed in the Bible. And that Love and Devotion, which arises from these scriptural Views of God and his Works, is the scriptural Devotion, and infinitely preferable to imaginary Transports. If our Views of the Works of Creation, Providence and Redemption, are according to Scripture, we need not raise Millions of imaginary Systems of Intelligences, to inflame our Hearts with a divine Fervor, nor have we the Example of one Saint in the Bible to justify such an Attempt.

when Joshua brought them in, and no Joseph sold, no Infants drowned, no making Bricks, no Carcases left in the Wilderness, and they Strangers to such great Changes, Trials and Sorrows; but then God would not have had an Opportunity for any of those wonderful Works which he wrought, whereby it *was known that he was the* LORD, and *the whole Earth was filled with his Glory*, and a Foundation laid for much Good to that People, then, and in all succeeding Generations. Yea, to this Day, the whole Church of God reap the Benefit of those wonderful Works, which were recorded for our Instruction, on whom the Ends of the World are come.

So, had Sin been for ever unknown in the System, there would have been no Opportunity for the mighty Works which God has wrought, since the Day he drove the apostate Angels out of Heaven, and our first Parents out of Paradise, and will yet work to the End of Time, and final Consummation of all Things. All which put together, will give the most full and compleat, the most clear and striking Picture of the divine Nature, for the Contemplation and Instruction of the Inhabitants of Heaven, thro' eternal Ages.

4. WHILE God forbears to interpose and hinder the Apostacy of finite Intelligences, being absolutely unobliged to say or do any more than he had said and done; and while, being left to their own free Choice, a Number of the Angels in Heaven, and Man upon Earth, rebel; and being left to themselves, all the fallen Angels, and great Numbers of fallen Men, go on in their Rebellion, acting out their Hearts, and exhibiting their Picture in their Conduct, thro' a long Succession of Ages; they plainly shew what all finite Intelligences in Heaven and on Earth might have come to, if they had not been prevented by the mere free Grace of the only immutable

mutable Being. Mean while, God, as has been said, in his Conduct, sets his own Character in the clearest and fullest Light. And so all holy Intelligences will, thro' eternal Ages, have the Advantages of these two compleat Pictures; the Picture that God has exhibited of himself, and the Picture which fallen Creatures have exhibited of themselves, to assist them to a clear View and realizing Sense of what God is, and of what they might have been. Just as the pious Jews in the earthly Canaan, when they reviewed the Conduct of God towards their Fore-fathers, and their Conduct towards him, had the Picture of each before their Eyes, for their Instruction from Age to Age. Which leads me to another Thought.

5. AT the End of these forty Years, Moses assembles the whole Congregation of Israel in the Plains of Moab; and, that they might be under the better Advantages to reap the Benefit of all past Transactions, now just as they are entering into the holy Land, he rehearses all God's Conduct towards them, and all their Conduct towards him, and labours deeply to impress a Sense of both on their Hearts: So at the final Consummation of all Things, the whole intelligent System will be assembled, and all past Things be opened, all God's Conduct towards his Creatures, and all their Conduct towards him; and that in such a Manner, as will make the deepest Impressions on all that great Assembly.

BUT as this will be a most solemn Day, and perhaps the most important Day that ever did or ever will happen, and a Day on which great Light will be given to God's universal Plan; so it may not be amiss to stop here a-while, and consider, Who is to be the Judge——and who shall be present in that great Assembly——and what will be brought into View—and what will be the final Sentence pronoun-

ceed on the Wicked—and what will be the visible Consequence—and what the State of the Righteous when all is over—and what must be their Reflections upon the whole.

1. THE MESSIAH, the Son of God, the Seed of the Woman, will be the Judge. So great was his Zeal for the Honour of God, and Concern for the Salvation of lost Sinners, that he offered to undertake to frustrate Satan's Scheme; and on the Cross, at the Expence of his Life, he entirely disconcerted the Plan the Devil had laid, and sapped the Foundation of his Kingdom; opening a Way, in which Glory might come to God, and Salvation to fallen Man. Which so pleased the eternal Father, that he gave him, for his Reward, the very Thing his Heart was chiefly set upon; even, full Power and Authority, compleatly to accomplish his Design. Messiah took the Throne, and, at the Head of the Universe, conducted all Things from that Day and forward, with his End in constant View, till Satan's Kingdom was destroyed, and he had reigned on Earth a thousand Years. And having seen of the Travail of his Soul to his Satisfaction, in the Recovery of a great Multitude of the human Race, a Multitude like the Stars of Heaven, and as the Sands on the Sea-Shore innumerable; now he comes to cause strict Justice to take Place on all the obstinate Adherents to Satan's Interest. Behold, he cometh in the Clouds of Heaven, and every Eye shall see him, and the fatal, the finishing Stroke shall be laid full on the old Serpent's Head.——Which shall be done in the most public Manner.——For

2. THE whole intelligent System shall be present. The holy Angels, once Satan's Companions in Heaven; shall now descend in Glory and Joy, attending the righteous Judge. And with them the Saints shall come from the upper World, and receive their

their Bodies, glorious and immortal, raised by their almighty Saviour. Mean while, the Saints on Earth shall be changed, and caught up to meet the Lord in the Air. Then Earth and Sea, Death and Hell shall give up their Dead; and all Kindreds, Nations, Languages and Tongues, shall be gathered to the Bar. And Satan and his Hosts, who of a long Time have been in Chains, reserved to the Judgment of the great Day, shall be forced, guilty and trembling, to stand forth in the Sight of the whole Creation.

And now,

3. THE History of the grand Rebellion shall be opened to the View of the whole intelligent Creation: from the Day of Satan's first Revolt, his Expulsion from Heaven, and Seduction of the human Kind, with all his Views and Motives, Ends and Designs, and the Methods by him taken from the Foundation of his Kingdom on Earth, to its final Destruction: And how apostate Men have heartily joined in his Interest; and both, as it were, combined together to defeat the Designs of the Redeemer.

THE Blood of the Martyrs will be brought into the Account, from the Blood of righteous Abel, to the Blood of the last Martyr that shall be slain, to evidence the obstinate Malice of Satan and his Adherents: Who, rather than that the Redeemer's Kingdom should be set up, have shed Rivers of human Blood.—— Yea, the Son of God himself has been put to Death in this apostate World.

ALL the Conduct of the human Race before the Flood, and how their Wickedness brought on the general Deluge: and all the Conduct of Mankind since; together with the Methods of divine Grace from the Beginning of the World:—particularly, the Calling of Abraham, and all the glorious Methods of divine Grace with his Seed, from Age to

Age, till the Coming of the Meſſiah: together with their perverſe Conduct in Egypt, in the Wilderneſs, and in the holy Land: their killing the Prophets, and ſtoning thoſe who were ſent unto them, and finally crucifying the Son of God, and obſtinately rejecting his glorious Goſpel:——And the Calling of the Gentiles into the Chriſtian Church, their Lothneſs to leave their Idols, the bloody Work they made among the primitive Profeſſors of Chriſtianity;—together with a Hiſtory of the Riſe & Progreſs and dreadful Deeds of the grand antichriſtian Apoſtacy,—will all be laid open to public View, in the Sight of the Creation.

AND not only theſe great Affairs, but alſo all the Conduct of particular Sinners, in every Age, with every ſecret Thing, ſhall be brought to Light on that great Day.

AND while Meſſiah appears in all his Father's Glory, the Reaſonableneſs of God's Law and the infinite Grace of the Goſpel will, *by his very Preſence*, be brought into ſuch a clear View, in the Eyes of all that great Aſſembly, as will not only ſtrike the fallen Angels, who have been inveterate Enemies to the righteous Government of God, and conſtant Oppoſers of the gracious Deſigns of the Redeemer, into the utmoſt Guilt and Confuſion; but alſo overwhelm with inexcuſable Guilt and ſelf-condemning Reproaches, all the loſt Sons of Adam, of every Nation under Heaven. The Gentile will now feel himſelf *without Excuſe*, for breaking the Law of Nature (*Rom.* I. 20.) and the Jew and the Chriſtian much more, who have ſinned againſt greater Light and deſpiſed infinite Grace. So that *every Mouth will be ſtopp'd*, and all Satan's Adherents from among the human Race, will ſtand *guilty before God.* (*Rom.* III. 19.) For, when the Lord cometh with all his heavenly Attendants, to execute Judgment upon

obſtinate

obſtinate Enemies, he will convince all, and ſilence all, who have juſtified themſelves, and ſpoken many *hard Speeches againſt him.* (*Jude* 14, 15.) For that ſhall not only be a Day of Wrath, but of *the Revelation of the righteous Judgment of God.* (*Rom.* II. 5.) —Mean while, all holy Intelligences will be fully prepared, cordially to approve, yea, heartily to rejoice in the final Sentence of the Judge.——The Fore-thought of which dreadful Sentence will fill Satan and all his mighty Potentates with Terror unutterable.——*And the Kings of the Earth, and the great Men, and the chief Captains, and the mighty Men,* who had met Armies in the Field of Battle, and looked Death in the Face undaunted, *and every Bond-Man, and every Free-Man* ſhall wiſh to *hide themſelves in the Dens, and in the Rocks of the Mountains:* yea, they will wiſh *the Mountains and the Rocks to fall on them, and hide them from the Wrath of the Lamb.* (*Rev.* VI. 15. 16.)

4. HE ſhall pronounce the Sentence, DEPART, *ye curſed.* To which, all the holy Angels and Saints, with divine and ſacred Fervor, will ſay, AMEN. HALLELUJAH. And,

5. No ſooner will the Sentence be pronounced, but they ſhall viſibly *go away into everlaſting Puniſhment.*—For God, who foreſaw their Apoſtacy and final Wickedneſs, before the Creation of the World, did in the Creation provide proper Materials by which to *ſhew his Wrath, and make his Power known,* and give an eternal Image of his infinite Hatred of Sin, in the Sight of the whole intelligent Syſtem. For all the ſtarry *Heavens,* and this *Earth,* are reſerved to that Purpoſe, laid up in Store as Fuel, *reſerved unto Fire, againſt the Day of Judgment and Perdition of ungodly Men. And the Heavens ſhall* then *paſs away with a great Noiſe,* ruſhing together into one general Heap; *for the Heavens being on Fire ſhall be*

diſſolved, and the Elements, of which they are compoſed, *ſhall melt with fervent Heat, and the Earth alſo* involved in the general Ruin, *and the Works that are therein ſhall be burnt up.* And ſo the whole material Syſtem ſhal form one immenſe *Lake of Fire and Brimſtone*, where the Heat ſhall be almoſt infinitely intenſe, in which the Damned ſhall weep and wail and gnaſh their Teeth for ever. *For their Worm ſhall never die, and the Fire ſhall never be quenched.* (2 *Pet.* III. 7—12. *Mar.* IX. 44.)——And all this open to the View, eternally open to the View of all the Inhabitants of Heaven. *For they ſhall be tormented with Fire and Brimſtone, in the Preſence of the holy Angels, and in the Preſence of the Lamb.* (*Rev.* XIV. 10, 11.)——And this great Fire will eternally be a viſible Emblem of the Fierceneſs and Wrath of almighty God, *to ſhew his Wrath, and make his Power known.* As when Pharaoh and his Hoſt were overwhelmed in the Red Sea, in Sight of all the Iſraelites, the God of the Hebrews *ſhewed his Power*, and cauſed *his Name to be declared throughout all the Earth:* (*Exod.* IX. 16.) So now, when Satan and all his Adherents from an apoſtate World are *caſt into this Lake of Fire and Brimſtone, to be tormented Day and Night, for ever and ever*, (*Rev.* XX. 10.) it will *ſhew God's Wrath, and make his Power known*, in the Sight of the whole intelligent Syſtem. (*Rom* IX. 22)

6. THE grand Rebellion in the intellectual Syſtem being brought to this Iſſue by MESSIAH, the Prince, whoſe Name is *King of Kings* and *Lord of Lords*, and an End put to this viſible Creation, in which ſo much Sin has been committed, now doomed to eternal Fire; MESSIAH, with the Angels, his Attendants, and with the Saved from among Men, in Number like the Sands on the Sea-Shore, ſhall aſcend to the heavenly Zion with Singing, and enter into everlaſting Joys.

FOR

For, as the Meſſiah loved his Church, when ſhe lay polluted in her Blood, and gave himſelf for her, and redeemed her from the Earth, and waſhed her in his own Blood, and made her a glorious Church, and adorned her as a Bride is adorned for her Husband; ſo now the Marriage of the Lamb ſhall be celebrated before all the Inhabitants of Heaven; and ſhe ſhall be called *The Bride, the Lamb's Wife.* (Rev. XXI. 9.) The ſaved ſhall be taken into the neareſt Union, and moſt beatific Communion with Jeſus Chriſt. Who will rejoice over them, as the Fruit of his Labours, as the Travail of his Soul, as the Joy that was ſet before him. Even *as a Bridegroom rejoiceth over the Bride; ſo will he rejoice over them.* (Iſa. LXII. 5.) And *he will rejoice and joy in them.* (Iſai. LXV. 19.) And *reſt in his Love.* (Zeph. III. 17.) And thus they ſhall *be for ever with the Lord*, ſhall *be where he is*, and *behold his Glory.* And *God will be their God, and wipe away all Tears from their Eyes; and there ſhall be no more Death, neither Sorrow, nor Crying, neither ſhall there be any more Pain; for the former Things are paſſed away.* All Temptations and Trials are at an End: for ever out of the Reach of Satan, Sin and Danger. *All Things* are *made new*, are put upon a new Foot; not as in the firſt Creation, when all finite Intelligences were put on Trial, and left to ſtand or fall for themſelves, God unobliged to hold them up, in Conſequence whereof Sin entered into Heaven and Earth; whereas in this new Heaven and Earth, there ſhall be no Sin; but in them *dwelleth Righteouſneſs.* (2 Pet. III. 13.) Chriſt will eternally be the Head of all holy Intelligences, and his Immutability be their eternal Security. (Eph. I. 10.) So they ſhall poſſeſs this good Land, which flows with Milk and Honey, which is the Glory of all Lands, of which the earthly Canaan was a Type; I ſay, they ſhall poſſeſs it for ever.

7. AND

7. AND upon the whole, what must be the Reflections of Angels and Saints, in those happy Regions of Light, Love, Peace, and eternal Contemplation? What must the elect Angels think, while they recollect the Day of their Creation; when Satan and all his Hosts stood with them, and bowed and worshiped before the Throne; and remember his foul Revolt, his Expulsion from Heaven, his Attempts to dishonour God, and get himself adored in an apostate World; and now view his eternal Overthrow, chained to the burning Lake for ever and ever?

AND what must be the Reflections of Adam, Abel, Enoch and Noah; of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; of Moses, Joshua, Samuel, and of all the Prophets, Apostles and Martyrs; and of all the Saved, in every Age of the World, and from every Nation, Language and Tongue under Heaven? while they recollect the original Apostacy of Mankind, and the whole History of all the Conduct of an apostate World, from the Fall of Adam to the Day of Judgment, as lately laid before the Tribunal of Christ: And remember their own former awful Temper and dreadful State while secure in Sin, running in full Career to Hell: And consider how they were pitied and redeemed by an incarnate God, and stopt and reclaimed by sovereign Grace, and kept by the Power of God thro' Faith unto Salvation; but for which, they not only might, but certainly would have been, in the same infinitely dreadful Condition they now behold others in, once their Neighbours and Companions, chained among Devils to the burning Lake.

As the pious Israelites, when quietly settled in the earthly Canaan, would naturally call to mind the Day, when they were Bondmen in the Land of Egypt, and the Egyptian Manners, and the idolatrous Customs in which they were educated: And

how

how they had forgotten the God of Abraham, and the promiſed Land, until the Arrival of Moſes from the Land of Midian, with the Rod of God in his Hand: And how they felt in the Time of the Plagues, and at their Egreſſion, and when purſued by Pharaoh, and when paſſing thro' the Sea on dry Ground, and when they found themſelves ſafe on the other Shore, while Pharaoh and his Hoſts were ſunk like Lead in the mighty Waters:——And talk over all their Wilderneſs-Travels, and all God's wonderful Works: And how they ſinned at Maſſah, Tiberah, and Kibroth-hattaavah, and were always provoking the Lord to Wrath: And how the Carcaſes of ſix hundred Thouſand fell in the Wilderneſs. "Yea, and we ſhould all have been cut off "and deſtroyed, had not the Lord wrought for his "great Name's ſake. It was not for our Righte-"ouſneſs, nor for the Uprightneſs of our Hearts, "that he brought us into this good Land: but from "his own ſovereign, ſelf-moving Goodneſs, and that "he might fill the whole Earth with his Glory. "Wherefore we will tell our Sons, and our Sons "Sons, what God hath wrought; that we and "they may fear and reverence that fearful and glo-"rious Name, THE LORD OUR GOD, and adore "his diſtinguiſhing Goodneſs, and walk in all his "Ways, and keep all his Commands for ever."—So it will be juſt as natural for thoſe, who are ſaved from among Men, when the Day of Judgment is paſt, and they ſafe in the heavenly Canaan, from thence to look back, and ſurvey, and talk over all the Ways of God to Men, and all the Ways of Man to God, from the Creation to the final Conflagration. And while they behold the divine Nature ſet in ſo clear, ſtrong and ſtriking a Light; and the Picture ſtill brightened by a View of the ſhock-

ing

ing Conduct of the human Race towards him,—— how will they feel, and what will they say?

LET us but imagine our selves in the Company of the Saved, and attend to the Conversation of Heaven. Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles and Martyrs, and Angels mixt in the same Assembly, all join to carry on the Conversation, each filled with holy Delight, while the Ways of God to Man, and the Ways of Man to God, are all the Theme.

ADAM begins.—— "How surprizing is it, to find "my self and so many of my Posterity in this happy "World, happier a thousand Times than the Para- "dise I lost! Indeed, I was happy then, but the "Scenes of Darkness, Guilt and Woe I passed thro' "after my Revolt from God, and all I have seen "and heard from that Day to this, Things never "to be forgotten, will for ever heighten the Joys of "this blessed Place. But, Oh, my foul Revolt! How "infinitely heinous was the Crime! How just, if God "had left me and all my Race to have gone on in "Rebellion, died in Despair, and spent eternal Ages "with Satan and his Hosts, in yonder Lake of Fire "and Brimstone! But sovereign Grace interposed! "And now I see the Promise accomplished; The "Seed of the Woman hath bruised the Serpent's "Head. Know it then, you are happy, not by me. "Not to me therefore, but to God, and God alone, "is all the Glory due."

GABRIEL next—— "Indeed, ye Sons of Men, "is all the Glory due to God. He only is Immu- "table. See in yon Lake, Satan and all his Hosts "for ever lost. Once this was their Abode. With "us they worshipped before the Throne. But "they fell. And so might we have done, but for "the Grace of God. And so might all Mankind "have fallen too, had they been created at once, "as we in Heaven were; and each set to act for

"himself,

" himſelf, as many of Adam's conceited Sons have
" often fooliſhly wiſhed had been the Caſe. From
" the Day that Satan fell, to this very Hour,
" every Thing we have obſerved, has joined to eſta-
" bliſh us in this, that there is no Safety for finite
" Intelligences, but in God alone. He only is by
" Nature immutable. Nor can a Creature, how
" exalted ſoever, arrive ſo near to a State of Inde-
" pendence, as to be in himſelf immutably good.
" God is our Strength and Refuge, and the only
" Source of our eternal Stability. Of whom, and
" by whom, and to whom are all Things, to whom
" belongs Glory for ever!"

St. PAUL—— " No doubt, the Intereſt of the
" human Race was as ſafe in Adam's Hands, as it
" would have been in our own. And it being no
" Injury to us, God might, without any Injuſtice
" to us, appoint him our public Head. And, in-
" deed, conſidering the Deſign God had in View,
" there was great Wiſdom in that Conſtitution.
" For Adam was ſuited, as a Type and Shadow,
" while we dwelt in that World of Darkneſs, to
" aſſiſt us to right Conceptions of Chriſt, our ſe-
" cond Adam, our ſecond public Head. The Om-
" niſcient, ſeeing no Truſt could be put in his
" Saints, and that even the Angels could not be
" depended upon, did, before the Foundation of
" the World, deſign his own Son ſhould become
" incarnate, and ſtand forth as the firſt-born of
" every Creature, the Head of the Creation of
" God; that in him he might gather together, fix
" and eſtabliſh all the Elect, whether belonging to
" Heaven or Earth, as we ſee at this Day.

ADAM—— " How glorious is the Exchange!
" Once I was your public Head: but in me all was
" loſt. God left me, that it might be ſeen what
" was in my Heart; that it might appear, all

" Fleſh is but Graſs. And now, not I, but his
" own Son is your Head. And your eternal Wel-
" fare is ſecured in the divine Immutability. This
" Glory was due to God alone, who only is un-
" changeable. And this Glory, by Means of my
" Fall, God has taken to himſelf in the Sight of
" the whole intellectual Syſtem."

GABRIEL—— " So Satan once ſtood at the
" Head of all the angelic Hoſts, who revolted with
" him, a mighty CHIEF. And like the bright
" Morning-Star, excelled in Luſtre all thoſe Stars
" of Heaven. But how art thou fallen, O Luci-
" fer, Son of the Morning! And how haſt thou
" drawn off a third Part of the Stars of Heaven, to
" join in thy Revolt!" *

ST. PAUL—— " BUT now, not an Arch-angel,
" nor the Father of Mankind, but God's dear Son,
" is, in this new State of Things, at the Head of
" all holy Intelligences. Both Angels and Men
" are gathered together in One; even in him, who
" is the Image of the inviſible God, and has exhi-
" bited the ſublimeſt Picture of the Deity in all his
" Works, but chiefly in the Work of our Redemp-
" tion."

ADAM——" AND all is free ſovereign Grace!—
" His giving Being, natural Powers, and moral Ex-
" cellencies to his Creatures in their firſt Creation,
" brought them into Debt to him; but not him to
" them. They owed themſelves to him: he owed
" them nothing. He was unobliged to become
" their Surety. I ought to have been obedient to
" the God that made me. But I fell. And the
" Throne

* WE read of *Principalities* and *Powers* among the evil Angels (Col. II. 15.) as well as among the Good. (Eph. I. 21.) And one of their Number is called a *Prince*. (Eph. II. 2.) And doubtleſs he was *Prince* before he fell, as well as ſince. See Rev, XIV. 3, 4, 7, 8, 9.

" Throne of the Almighty was guiltleſs. De-
" ſtruction was our due. Oh, how free and ſove-
" reign is the Grace that has ſaved us!"

MOSES—— " WHAT muſt have been the Con-
" ſequence, had Mankind in their fallen State been
" merely under the Law of Nature, which requir-
" ed ſinleſs Perfection, curſing the Man who conti-
" nued not in all Things! And yet this Law was
" ſtrictly righteous. And as ſuch, was it republiſhed
" from Mount Sinai, by the holy ONE of Iſrael.
" But altho' our Depravity did not free us from the
" Government and Authority of God, yet it laid a
" ſure Foundation for our breaking the Law. And
" ſo, had mere Law taken Place, we ſhould all have
" been for ever loſt.—And this had been but ſtrict-
" ly juſt.——But Oh, the free and boundleſs Grace
" of God!—His own Son became a Curſe for us,
" that all theſe Bleſſings we now enjoy, in this happy
" World, might come upon us."

St. PAUL— " CREATURES becoming apoſtate,
" and turning Enemies and Rebels to the God that
" made them, this did not in the leaſt diſannul God's
" Right to them, and Authority over them; but
" they ſtill remained by Right his Subjects, and
" under his Government, and accountable at his
" Tribunal. And accordingly we have lately ſeen
" wicked Men and Devils brought to the Bar, and
" have ſtand without Excuſe, every Mouth ſtopt,
" all of them guilty before God.—On the Foot of
" mere Law, therefore, God might juſtly have dealt
" with us after our Apoſtacy; and by Law might
" have judged and condemned us all to yonder
" Lake of Fire and Brimſtone, to welter out eter-
" nal Ages.——O the Height, and Depth, and
" Length, and Breadth of the Love of Chriſt, which
" paſſeth all Underſtanding!—The Law was holy,
" juſt and good—He judged it ſo—he died to anſwer

" its Demands. Nor did he ask our Pardon at his " Father's Hands, on cheaper Terms." *

" *GABRIEL*——" How had it gratified the in- " fernal Hosts, lately banished the heavenly World, " *by Law*, to have seen LAW set aside in Favour of " a fallen Race! And how would they have tri- " umphed, to see the Judge of the whole System res- " pect Persons, and have no Regard to Right!— " Better, infinitely better, all the human Race had " been for ever lost."

St. PAUL—— " You speak the Sentiments of " all the Saved. Had we been pardoned to God's " Dishonour, it would have sapped the Foundation " of all our Joys.—How much soever you pitied our " Case, you never desired our Relief in such a Way."

GABRIEL—— " I remember well the Day, the " News of your Revolt first reached the heavenly " World.—We thought you all for ever lost—and " approved the Thing as just—We saw no Way for " your Relief—nor shall we ever forget how Things " appeared—God's new Creation all in Ruins: and " Satan triumphing in his Deed.—But, O the " Love of God to you! And O the boundless " Wisdom of him who sits upon the Throne!"

MOSES——

* How infinitely shocking, to the Inhabitants of Heaven, would the Work of our Redemption appear, had Christ died to answer the Demands of an unjust and wicked Law! If the Law, which requires sinless Perfection on Pain of eternal Damnation (Gal. III. 10.) was a cruel, unjust and wicked Law (as some, who pretend to trust in the Blood of Christ for Salvation, are so inconsistent with themselves as to affirm) it was infinitely wicked, the Son of God should die to answer its Demands. On this Hypothesis, the Work of Redemption, instead of being the most glorious, would be infinitely the most shocking Affair that ever happened.

MOSES—— " So Israel once, for their Idolatry, " stood all condemn'd to Death—*Let me alone*, the " Almighty said, *that in a Moment I may destroy them*— " I knew, the Cause was just. And never shall " forget how he wrought for his GREAT NAME's " SAKE."

GABRIEL—— " That was but a faint Image of " this. For now a whole World lay in Ruins— " and Satan and all his Hosts in Triumph were ready to say, *'Tis beyond the* ALMIGHTY *himself to disconcert our Plan. His Honour, Law and Truth oblige him to accomplish the Thing we would—Devote the World to Death.*"

ADAM—— " Now the full Purport of those " mysterious Words, *The Seed of the Woman shall bruise the Serpent's Head*, once the Foundation of " all my Hopes, altho' but little understood, now " their full Purport all opens to View.—On the " Cross, he spoiled Principalities and Powers, sapped " the Foundation of Satan's Hopes, and ruined all his " hellish Scheme——Since his Exaltation, he has " compleated his whole Design—Yonder now lies " the old Serpent, his Head, altho' so replete with " Craft and Poison, thoro'ly bruised, and himself " chained in the burning Lake.——But why am I " among the Saved! Never was there such an Instance of free sovereign Grace! Satan began Rebellion in Heaven, and I began Rebellion on " Earth: and why are we not now both together, in " the same burning Lake?"

ABEL— " THERE is my Brother Cain, for ever " lost.—O the sovereign Grace of God to me!"

NOAH—— " THERE are the Inhabitants of the " old World.—They filled the Earth with Violence " —were deaf to all the Warnings of a long-suffering God—were destroyed in the general Deluge— " now weltring in the burning Lake.—O the so-

" vereign Grace of God to me ! Saved then in the " Ark : Safe now in Chriſt."

ABRAHAM—— " SUCH a univerſal Deluge, " ſuch a dreadful Deſtruction, one would have tho't, " would never have been forgotten. But no ſoon- " er did Mankind increaſe, but they turned their " Backs on God : and in a few Ages, all began to " ſink into Idolatry. Then was I born in Ur of " the Chaldees, where I might have lived and died " eſtranged from God, and been now among the " Damned, had not God of his ſovereign Grace vi- " ſited my Soul, and called me from the Idols of " my native Land. But behold, now here I am, " and here is Iſaac my Son, and Jacob my Grand- " ſon, and Thouſands of my Poſterity, in Glory ! " Everlaſting Praiſe is due to free and ſovereign " Grace."

St. PETER—— " YONDER, in that Lake of " Fire and Brimſtone, is Judas the Traitor, once a " Follower of Chriſt, now doomed to endleſs Woe. " Oh never ſhall I forget the black and gloomy " Night, when I curſed & ſwore, *I know not the Man*, " my bleſſed Maſter ! Nor ſhall I ever forget the " kind Look, which bro't me to Repentance. Nor " ſhall I ever ceaſe to adore ſovereign diſtinguiſh- " ing Grace, but for which I had now been with " Judas in the burning Lake."

St. PAUL—— " BUT of all the Saved, no In- " ſtance of ſovereign Grace, like me!* Once a Per- " ſecutor,

* *Sovereign* ; not becauſe God acted abſolutely without any Reaſon at all, in converting a perſecuting *Saul*, who was the worſt of the two, and paſſing by the young Man in the Goſpel : for infinite Wiſdom always acts on the high- eſt and beſt Reaſon. But becauſe *Saul* was not choſen for his Goodneſs, being *the chief of Sinners*. 1. *Tim.* 1. 15. Yet God had wiſe Ends in his Choice. (See *ver.* 16.)

As

" ſecutor, and a Blaſphemer. Never ſhall I forget
" the Day I ſet out for Damaſcus, breathing forth
" Threatnings and Slaughter againſt the Diſciples
" of the holy Jeſus. But, O the Grace, the ſo-
" vereign Grace of God, that ſtopped me in my
" Career—ſent me to carry the glad Tidings of Sal-
" vation to the Gentiles,—and gave me Thouſands
" to be my Joy and Crown of Rejoicing; as it is
" this Day!"

St. PAUL's CONVERTS—— " Once we were
" dead in Treſpaſſes and Sins, buried in heathenith
" Darkneſs; and even under the full Power of the
" Prince of Darkneſs; and might now have been
" with him in Woe. But, O the ſovereign Grace
" of God to us, who ſent his choſen Veſſel, and
" called us out of Darkneſs into marvellous Light,
" and now hath brought us to this World of Joy!—
" Eternal Praiſes to the Lord.

[THOUSANDS and Millions will ſpeak the ſame Language, and all join to proſtrate themſelves before the Throne, and give all the Glory and Praiſe of their Salvation to God and to the Lamb: and with the moſt fervent Love and Gratitude, attended with the deepeſt Humility and Reverence, devote themſelves to God thro' Jeſus Chriſt for ever and ever.——And while all this is obſerved, very natural muſt the following Reflections be.]

GABRIEL—— " How is Satan diſappointed in
" every Reſpect! And Heaven become a more

As no Doubt he always has, altho' in innumerable Caſes they are abſolutely beyond our Reach. God has a Right in this Caſe, as the great *Sovereign* of the Univerſe, to do as he pleaſes. But he always does what is wiſeſt to be done. *His Sovereignty* is a *wiſe* and *holy Sovereignty*, and an infinitely amiable Part of his moral Character. It is *God's Glory*. Exod. XXXIII. 18, 19.

" glorious and happy Place, than ever it was!—— " I remember, when there was nothing but Love, " Order and Harmony in Heaven and Earth. I " remember, when Satan a glorious Archangel first " broke Order in Heaven, rose up in Rebellion a- " gainst the ALMIGHTY; and how he carried the " Infection down to Earth. And I remember the " horrible Tragedies he has acted over, from Age " to Age, at the Head of the Powers of Darkness, " ruling in the Children of Disobedience, and filling " the World of Mankind with Sin and Woe: and " the mighty Opposition he has constantly made " against the Interest and Kingdom of the Messiah; " sometimes as a great Red Dragon, thinking by " Fire and Sword to bear down all before him; " and then as an Angel of Light, spreading Delu- " sions far and wide; not caring what Shapes he " put on, if by any Means he might attain his " Ends.—But now his Day is over: His Designs are " frustrated: His Expectations disappointed, and " his Kingdom ruined. And behold, Yonder lies " the Monster, chained in that burning Lake; now " the only Place of his everlasting Abode; wel- " tring in Horror, Rage and dreadful Dispair!

" IF he hoped to bring our glorious Monarch into " Contempt in his Dominions, among his Creatures; " he is disappointed. For God is more loved, honour- " ed, revered, extolled & praised, than if these Things " had never happened.——If he hoped to lessen " his Authority, and bring his Law into Contempt, " that it should be looked upon a light Matter to " transgress; he is in this also disappointed. For " never would it have appeared so infinitely hei- " nous, and so shockingly dreadful a Thing, to " transgress, if these Things had never happened. " ——Or if he hoped, at least, that the Execution " of divine Vengeance would lessen the Manifesta-

" tions

" tions of divine Goodness, and diminish the Hap-
" pineſs of the intellectual System; he is also dis-
" appointed in this. For God has shewn his Wrath
" in such a Manner, as to render the Riches of his
" glorious Grace infinitely the more conspicuous, in
" the Sight of all the Inhabitants of Heaven; and
" their Love and Joy arise unspeakably higher,
" than if these Things had never happened.——
" Yea, all Things have worked for Good, and turn-
" ed out well. His Pride has been the Means of a
" great Increase of Humility among finite Intelli-
" gences; as it has led them to see what they
" might have come to, if left of God. His Fall has
" been the Means of our Confirmation. His In-
" gratitude, of our being for ever the more sensi-
" ble of the rich Goodness of God. His setting
" up to be independent, the Means to bring us to a
" more absolute and entire Dependance on God,
" the only immutable Being. And his aiming at
" Supremacy, seducing Mankind, and raising all this
" Confusion in the System, has occasioned the AL-
" MIGHTY to assert his own Supremacy, and set
" his own SON at the Head of the Creation, and in
" him to bring all Things to an everlasting Esta-
" blishment, in a Way most honourable to God
" and most advantageous to the System.——So that
" he is disappointed in every Respect.——He *meant*
" *all for Evil*: but lo, *God meant all for Good*, to bring
" to pass as it is this Day.

" So all his Successes have now at last ended in
" the eternal Ruin of his Cause: And his Triumphs,
" in eternal Despair of ever again lifting up his
" Head. And all the Mischief he hath wrought,
" hath in Fact brought down a ten-fold Vengeance
" on himself, in yon Lake of Fire and Brimstone;
" where he is doomed to lie, weltring under divine
" Wrath, thro' endless Ages, to exhibit to the View

" of

" of all Intelligences, the evil Nature and dreadful " Consequences of Rebellion.—Mean while, GOD " and his MESSIAH reign, and will for ever reign " ——And thus *the Seed of the Woman hath bruised* " *the Serpent's Head.* AMEN. HALLELUJAH."

SUCH will be the Reflections of Angels and Saints after the Day of Judgment, when they have seen God's grand Plan finished, and from those celestial Regions look back and review the Whole.

AND now, who can doubt, but that the Humility, Holiness and Happiness of the Saved will be much greater, perhaps a Thousand Times, perhaps Ten Thousand Times greater, than if these Things had never happened? And how know we, therefore, but that there may, on the present Plan, more Honour redound to God, and more Good to the System, on the whole, than if Sin and Misery had been for ever unknown; yea, almost infinitely more? *

Objection. " BUT was there no other Way, in " which God could have made Angels and Men as " holy and happy without the Permission of Sin?"

Answer. No. Not if there were no other Way, in which he could so clearly and fully manifest, and so advantageously communicate himself to his Creatures as this.—For his Creatures can neither be holy nor happy, but in the Knowledge and Enjoyment of him. Now, if I am not able to prove there was no Way, yet the *Objector* cannot possibly contrive a Way, in which God could have given such clear

* The Computations in Page 65, 66. Serm. on the Millennium, and in Page 144, 145. on the Wisdom of God, &c. are sufficient to clear the Point. If but two Thirds of Mankind should be saved, and their Happiness be increased but an Hundred Fold, considering the Greatness of their Number, the Overplus Happiness in the whole must be *Millions of Millions of Millions* of Degrees; as any may see by Calculation.

clear and full Manifestations of himself, and communicate Good to his Creatures, in every Respect so advantageously, Sin and Misery being for ever unknown, as he has, and will, upon the present Plan. So that, for aught the Objector, or I, know, this, of all possible Plans, may be the best contrived, to give a full and clear Manifestation of the Deity, and raise Intelligences to the highest Pitch of moral Perfection and Happiness. And its being chosen by infinite Wisdom before all others, demonstrates, that this is actually the Case.

THUS then stands the Argument. God's permitting Joseph to be sold into Egypt in the Manner he was, of all other Methods was, as Things were circumstanced, the best calculated to answer the noble Ends God had in View; at least, so far as we can see: and God's actually choosing that Method, demonstrates, it was actually the best; infinite Wisdom being Judge.——So here—God's laying out the present Plan is, of all possible Methods, the best to answer the noble Ends God has in View; at least, so far as we can see: and God's choosing this, before all others, demonstrates, that this is actually the Case; infinite Wisdom being Judge.

Obj. "BUT if we grant this to be the best Me-
" thod to accomplish the Ends God had in View,
" and grant his Ends are ever so noble and glori-
" ous; yet how could it be right, for him to *do Evil,*
" *that Good might come?*"

Answ. 1. As God was not obliged to interpose and hinder Joseph's being sold; so his not interposing, cannot be called, *doing Evil.*—And God's not hindering the Apostasy of Angels and Men, can in no Sense be called, *doing Evil that Good might come*; unless we can first prove, that he was bound to hinder them. And let this once be proved, the Consequence will be, if any of God's Creatures and

Subjects,

Subjects, at any Time sin, then God must bear the Blame. And so, not the Creature, but the Creator, will be under Bonds.

2. IN some Cases, even we our selves have a Right, in a Sense to permit Sin, and may act wisely in doing so, as common Sense teaches all Mankind. Thus, a wise and good Master, who has a very lazy, unfaithful, deceitful Servant, whom he often catches at Play, when he ought to be at his Work, and whose Manner is to lie himself clear, if he possibly can, may, upon a Time, if he pleases, unseen by his Servant, stand an Hour, and let him take his Course, with a View more thoro'ly to convict him, and reform him. And this is not *doing Evil, that Good may come*, but acting wisely, in Order to reclaim a lazy, deceitful Servant.

3. GOD was at the Head of the System, which was all his own; and it belonged to him, to lay out a universal Plan, if I may compare great Things with small, just as it belongs to the Head of a Family, to lay out Family-Schemes. And he knew perfectly well, what would be most to his own Honour, and to the general Good of the System, whether to become Surety for all Intelligences at their first Creation, before they had learnt their Need of his Interposition—or, rather, to let them take their Course, and learn by Experience, what was no other Way so well to be learnt, that they might be the better prepared to acknowledge him as the only Being by Nature immutably good, and to receive with suitable Gratitude, this Super-Creation-Grace, and give him Opportunity, mean while, to shew that he was the LORD, and fill the whole System with his Glory, to the great Increase of the Holiness and Happiness of his Creatures.—And he had a Right to conduct according to his own Wisdom, and to do what he knew would best to be done. * *Obj.*

* See Mr. EDWARDS on *Liberty*, &c. Pag. 260——267.

Object. "WELL, if God wills Sin, then it ſeems "Sin is agreable to his Will. And if from all "Eternity he decreed the Miſery of his Creatures, "then it ſeems, their Miſery ſuits him. Beſides, "what is decreed muſt neceſſarily come to paſs, and "ſo our Freedom is deſtroyed. All which are "contrary to Scripture, and to common Senſe."

Anſw. "Well," ſays the idle deceitful Servant, who was catched at his Play, and ſuffered to take his own Courſe for an whole Hour,——"Well, "Maſter, now I ſee you love I ſhould be lazy, and "play; for otherwiſe you would have hindred me. "And now I ſee you love to whip me, for the Sake "of Whipping; for otherwiſe you would not have "ſuffered me to have deſerved it. Beſides, you "decreed to permit me to play on, that whole Hour; "and ſo I could not poſſibly help it."——All which would not only be contrary to common Senſe, but appear to favour of ſo great Perverſeneſs, and be ſo very ſaucy and provoking, that his Maſter would not think it needful to give any particular Anſwer, but rather proper to puniſh him according to his Deſerts.—For it muſt be plain to the Servant at the ſame Time, that Idleneſs and Deceitfulneſs were the Things his Maſter hated in him. And he muſt know, he acted freely and deſerved the Whip: and that it became his Maſter to puniſh ſuch a Villain, not only becauſe he deſerved it, but alſo that his other Servants might hear and fear, and do no more ſo wickedly.—Nothing can be plainer, than that the Jews acted freely in bringing about the Death of Chriſt. And it was one of the greateſt Crimes that ever was committed. And yet it came to paſs according to the divine Decree. *Act.* II. 23. & IV. 28. And none ever thought, becauſe from all Eternity God decreed the Death of his Son, that therefore his Agonies on the Croſs were pleaſing to his Father,

as one that loves to see others in Misery meerly for Misery's Sake.

Obj. "BUT yet,—Is it not a Pity, *any* are finally lost?—Would it not have been better, if *all* had been saved?"

Answ. IT would, no doubt, be better for their own Interest, if the Rebels in any earthly Kingdom would all come in, and submit: and they would in such a Conduct shew more Respect to their lawful Sovereign. On which Accounts their Sovereign may send and sincerely invite and command them to return and submit, altho' he knows, they will not, and is at the same Time determined to do no more, but upon their obstinate Refusal [as the best Thing that can be done] to make them Examples of his Wrath, in the Sight and for the Instruction of all his Dominions. Nor can any justly say, it is a Pity he did not take more Pains with them, or that it is a Pity he punished them at last. *

PHARAOH

* And might not such an earthly Monarch send to such Rebels, and say, *As I live, I have no Pleasure in your Death.* (*Ezek.* XXXIII. 11.) *I am long-suffering towards you, not willing any of you should be put to Death, but that all should come to Repentance.* (2 *Pet.* III. 9.) And that with the utmost Sincerity,—altho' he knew their Obstinacy was so great, that they would not hearken; and altho' he was before determined to do no more, but (as the best Thing that could be done) to proceed to their Execution, for the Vindication of his Honour and Instruction of all his Dominions!——Surely none ever thought but that an earthly Sovereign may in such a Case have a real and sincere Regard to the Welfare of his Subjects, considered as Men; altho' he is determined, as a wise Governour, *to shew his Wrath* in their Destruction, considered as obstinate Rebels, after having *endured with much Long-suffering*. (*Rom.* IX. 22.) Nor did ever any doubt but that he has Right to set Bounds to his Endeavours

PHARAOH had shewn more Respect to God, and it had been more for his Interest, had he repented of his Oppressions, and without Delay yielded Obedience to the divine Command, and let Israel go. But no Man has Reason to think, it had been better if God had said or done more to make him obedient, or that it was a Pity, God punished him at last as he did. [It was the best Thing that could be done.]

MOSES had beheld all his Conduct. And Moses beheld the Punishment the ALMIGHTY inflicted on him and on his Army. And what did Moses think? Did he think, it was a Pity, that proud & haughty Monarch was so bro't down?—a Pity, the cruel Egyptians were thus drowned? Or did not the divine Conduct appear perfect in Wisdom, Glory and Beauty?—— Now if none are finally lost, but those who deserve eternal Damnation, as really as Pharaoh and his Host did to perish in the Red-Sea; and whose eternal Damnation will turn as much to the Honour of God and general Good of God's chosen People, as did the Destruction of Pharaoh and his Host, and as much more as perfectly to answer to the greater Importance of the Case; it is not at all strange if their eternal Damnation should appear in the Eyes of God, An-

vours and to his Patience, or that it becomes him to do so. (*Psal.* LXXXI. 8—13.) And if God's Conduct in giving up obstinate Sinners is consistent with all the tender Concern he expresses for them, his decreeing to conduct so is consistent too. If he acts consistently, it was consistent to determine to act so.—— It may be observed, that as the Scriptures take it for granted, Mankind are moral Agents, and proper Subjects of moral Government; so do I in all the above Reasonings. Nor is it needful I should enter particularly into this Point again, after what has been already published. (See my *True Religion delineated*, and *Sermon* on *Gal.* III. 24.)

gels and Saints thro' eternal Ages, in as beautiful and glorious a Light, as did the Deſtruction of Pharaoh and his Hoſt, to Moſes, when he compoſed and ſang that Song recorded in XVth. Chapter of *Exodus*.—The Egyptians thought it a Pity, their Monarch and his Army were loſt. Yea, to them it appeared a dreadfully ſhocking Affair.——But Moſes ſang, *The* LORD *hath triumphed* GLORIOUSLY. And was exceedingly rejoiced, to ſee that he had thus *ſhewn his Power*, and laid a Foundation to have his *Name declared throughout all the Earth.*

AND thus will it appear to all the Inhabitants of Heaven, when Satan and all his Adherents lie overwhelmed in the Lake of Fire and Brimſtone. And therefore the heavenly Hoſts are repreſented in Scripture, as *ſinging the Song of Moſes*; triumphing in the Deſtruction of Satan and his Adherents, as Moſes did in the Deſtruction of Pharaoh and his Army! (*Rev.* XV. 3.) And as repeating their HALLELUJAHS, exulting and rejoycing while they ſee *the Smoke of their Torment aſcending for ever and ever!* (*Rev.* XIX. 1,—6.)

NOR need it ſeem ſtrange, that the Inhabitants of Heaven, who have ſo great a Reſpect to God, and are ſuch hearty Friends to his Intereſt and to the Honour of his Government, ſhould ſo entirely acquieſce in the righteous Puniſhment of his inveterate, obſtinate Enemies. If vindictive Wrath were nothing but groundleſs, arbitrary Vengeance, it would be quite another Thing: but as it is (in the Governor of the World) nothing but *Love*, to God, to Virtue, to the beſt Good of the Syſtem, bearing down in a wiſe and righteous Manner the Enemies of God, of Virtue, and of the Syſtem, it cannot but appear infinitely amiable in the Eyes of the Inhabitants

tants of Heaven.* It is much more ſtrange, that any who heartily acquieſce in the Goſpel-Way of Salvation, ſhould be ſtumbled at the final Puniſhment of the Wicked. It muſt be ſtrange Partiality in us, indeed, to acquieſce in the Death of God's own Son, when ſtanding in the Room of Sinners, and yet to object againſt the Puniſhment of Sinners themſelves. It argues, either that we are very ſelfiſh, or elſe that we love the Son of God leſs than we do God's obſtinate Enemies, to be content that he ſhould bear the Curſe of the Law, but loth that they ſhould. The ſame Views which cauſe the Saints in Heaven to acquieſce in God's ſetting forth his own Son to be a Propitiation for Sin, to ſecure the Honour of the divine Juſtice, at the ſame Time lead them cordially to approve of the eternal Damnation of obſtinate Sinners themſelves.

BESIDES, to uſe the Apoſtle's own Words, who was inſpired by him who has a perfect View of all Things, and knows what is beſt in ſo important a Caſe, (Rom. IX. 22.) *What if God, willing to ſhew his Wrath, and make his Power known, endured with much Long-ſuffering the Veſſels of Wrath fitted for Deſtruction?* What if God, who doubtleſs is the fitteſt Judge, and to whom alone the Deciſion of this Affair belonged, what if God tho't it beſt to ſingle out ſome of his apoſtate Creatures, ſome of his obſtinate Enemies,

* VINDICTIVE Juſtice, if I miſtake not, ariſes wholly from *Love*, and is always under the Direction of infinite Wiſdom. And if ſo, it is an amiable Perfection in the Deity. *Love* is the Sum of the Moral Law, which is a Tranſcript of the moral Perfections of God: Therefore *Love* is the Sum of God's moral Perfections. Love to God, to Virtue, and to the Syſtem, will naturally induce the Governor of the World to puniſh thoſe who are obſtinate Enemies to God, to Virtue, and to the Syſtem, according to their Deſerts.

who inveterately hate him and his Government, and Pharaoh-like, bid him Defiance; I say, What if God tho't it best to single out some of these, to be Examples of his Wrath, to be visible Monuments of his Justice and Power, that the whole System might eternally see how infinitely he hates Sin, and how easily he can subdue his Enemies, and what a fearful Thing it is to rise in Rebellion against him:—(Ver. 23.) *and that he might make known the Riches of his Glory on the Vessels of Mercy, which he had afore prepared unto Glory:* That, by the Means, he might set the infinite Freeness and Greatness of his Grace, exercised towards the Saved, in the most conspicuous Point of Light, who in their Destruction will eternally see what they deserved, and must certainly have endured, but for the dying Love of Christ, and sovereign Grace of God?——What if infinite Wisdom has judged this the best Plan? Who is there among all finite Intelligences, that has Right or Reason to object?

Obj. "BUT if this Plan was really the best, Why "do not Mankind now prefer it above all others, "and heartily rejoice in it? Why so much Mur-"muring around the World?"

Ans. IT was but about an hundred Miles from Egypt to Canaan, and in forty Days, conducted by ALMIGHTINESS, the Israelites might have marched from Egypt thither; and the Canaanites being all struck dead in one Night, as an hundred and eighty-five Thousand once were in the Assyrian Camp; (2 *Kings.* XIX. 35.) the Israelites might have taken immediate Possession, and spent their Days in Feasting and Joy. And had they been offered their Choice, no doubt they would have preferred this Scheme, before their forty Years March in the Wilderness; where the Lord led them thro' a Land of Deserts and of Pits, through a Land of Drought, and

and of the Shadow of Death, thro' a Land that no Man passed thro', and where no Man dwelt; and suffered them to hunger and to thirst, and for their Murmurings under their Trials, struck them dead by Hundreds and Thousands. For they generally cared only for their own present carnal Interest, Ease and Comfort. They had no Relish to those Things which God's Heart was chiefly set upon—Did not want to see God exalted, his Authority established, or to be trained up to a Life of entire Dependance on God, to have their Hearts humbled and broken, and be made to know that not for their Righteousness were they brought into that good Land; nor did they care any Thing about that Instruction which succeeding Generations might obtain from their Trials, and from God's Conduct towards them those 40 Years in the Wilderness. And had Moses been able to open to their View the great & glorious Ends which were likely to be answered, they soon would have replied, "And what Good will it do us, if all the Earth is "filled with his Glory, and if all these Ends are "accomplished, and if it will be better for the Na- "tion in the long Run? What Good will all this "do us, so long as our Carcases fall here in the "Wilderness? It had been better for us to have "lived and died in Egypt. Yea, we had rather "never have been born, than to undergo what we "undergo, and die here at last." Nor had it been in the Power of Moses to have stopt their Mouths, unless he could have changed their Hearts. Yea, notwithstanding all that God himself said to them, they continued murmuring in their Tents, till he was obliged to execute terrible Vengeance upon them. *Fourteen Thousand* and *seven Hundred* were struck dead at one Time. (Num. XVI. 49.) *Now all these Things happened to them for our Examples, and they are written for our Admonition.* (1 Cor. X. 11.)—It were better,

therefore, if Mankind would leave murmuring at God's Ways, which are undoubtedly all Wise; whether any Mortal in this present dark and imperfect State is able to shew the Wisdom of them, or not. If all that has been said, appears to have no Weight, and we give up God's Plan as being at present absolutely inexplicable; yet, from the infinite Wisdom of the Deity, it is capable of strict Demonstration, that of all possible Plans he has chose the best. Therefore, the Fault is not in him, but in us. That there were none to be blamed in the Case of the Israelites but themselves, we now can plainly see: so will it appear at the Day of Judgment, that God always did Right, and acted wisely. And then every Mouth will be stopt. And since we are certain, this will finally be the Case, it infinitely better becomes us to cease our Murmurings, and learn to justify God, and take all the Blame to our selves: and as we are invited, so without Delay to cast away the Weapons of our Rebellion, return and submit to our rightful Sovereign, thro' Jesus Christ, now while Mercy is offered to us.

BUT if any haughty Sinner, Pharaoh-like, says, "Who is the Lord? I know not the Lord, nor "care for his Authority, or Government, nor will "I humble my self before him:"—let such a haughty Wretch know, that the ALMIGHTY is above him, and can accomplish all his Schemes without his Consent. For having endured with all proper Long-suffering such impudent Sinners, he can shew his Wrath and make his Power known in their eternal Destruction, to the Honour of his Name, and to the eternal Instruction of the Saved.

As for those who leave the Honour of God, the infinitely great and glorious God, the Author, Proprietor and King of the whole System, absolutely out of the Account, as a Thing of no Importance, and

and what the Governor of the World is not at all concerned about, and imagine that the Good of God's Creatures and Subjects is the only Thing to be attended unto, in all the divine Conduct, as moral Governor of the World;—as for such, I say, it is impossible to reconcile any Part of God's Plan to their fundamental Maxim. For if nothing was of Importance but the Creatures Good, why was not that solely attended to? Why were all put on Trial? And why eternal Destruction threatned for the first Offence? Or ever threatned at all? Or the sinning Angels expelled the heavenly World, and the human Race all doomed to Death for *the first Transgression?* And if our Good is all that God now has in View, why have not more Pains been taken for our Recovery, from Age to Age, from the Beginning of the World? Yea, why are not infinite Wisdom and almighty Power effectually exerted to render all eternally happy? For the Saved, if this Principle is true, will be eternally grieved to see any of their Fellow-Creatures for ever in Hell-Torments. Nor can the eternal Torments of the Damned answer any valuable End, on this Hypothesis.

STRANGE are the Positions, which *the Chevalier* RAMSEY has laid down in Order to reconcile the divine Conduct to this Notion. He maintains, that "God did not certainly know that his Creatures "would fall—And if he had known it, he could "not have hindered it, consistently with their free "Agency—He has been trying ever since to re-"claim them—Intends to continue in the Use of "Means till he has reclaimed them all—The Tor-"ments of Hell being the most powerful Means "of Grace, are finally to be used, with such as can-"not otherwise be reclaimed, merely out of pure "Love to the Damned, to purify and bring them

"to

" to a better Mind—So all at last shall be recovered " and made for ever happy!"——But if God meant to use the most powerful Means with a fallen World he possibly could, and that in every Age, as upon that Hypothesis it must be supposed, Why did he send but one NOAH to the old World? Why not 2 or 3000? Why did he raise up but one MOSES, and but one ELIJAH, and send them only to the Israelites? Why did he not raise up Thousands in every Age and Nation under Heaven, and make thoro' Work? And why does he not take more Pains with us of this Age? Raise up Thousands as well qualified to preach as St. Paul? And pour out his Spirit on all Flesh, as he did on the 3000 on the Day of Pentecost?——If our Good was all he had in View, and he really intended to save us all, one would think he would *now* use the most powerful Means to reclaim us, and not stay till the Day of Judgment, and then doom us to Hell, in order to fit us for Heaven!——Besides, at that great Day, a guilty World will find, that Christ does not come to enter upon the Use of farther Means to recover the Wicked, but to give them their final Doom. Christ will not come to save a guilty World, but to judge them. Not cloathed with Love, but *in flaming Fire.* Not to do them Good, but to *take Vengeance.* (2 Thes. I. 8.) Not out of Love to them, but to *shew his Wrath.* (Rom. IX. 22.) Not to purify them, but to cast them, like worthless *Chaff*, into *unquenchable Fire.* (Matt. III. 12.) Not to fit them for, and finally to bring them to Heaven, with the good Wheat, but as *Tares to burn them up.* (Matt. XIII 30.) Not aiming at their Good, as Vessels of Mercy, but aiming at their *Destruction as Vessels of Wrath.* (Rom. IX 22.) Not to discipline them for a Season, but to *punish them with everlasting Destruction.* (2 Thes. I. 9.) Send them into *everlasting Fire* (Matt. XXV. 41.) into

everlasting

everlasting Punishment. (Ver. 46.) where *the Worm never dies, and the Fire is not quenched* (Mar. IX. 44, 46, 48.) but the Smoke of their Torment *shall ascend for ever and ever.* (Rev. XIX. 3.)——And the Eternity of Hell-Torments will effectually convince the whole System, that God has an infinite Regard to something else besides merely the Good of his Creatures; as it is meet and fit he should. (See Mal. I. 6,—14.) And this Part of his Conduct will help to compleat his Picture, and finish his true Character, in the Eyes of all Intelligences. As yet Mankind hardly believe him in earnest. Words do not answer the End. But Actions speak louder than Words, and will work a thoro' Conviction.

As for the common Plea, that "God needs no-"thing from his Creatures, and so can only aim "at their Good:" It is a Way of Reasoning contrary to the universal Sense of Mankind, in all Cases in any Measure analogous. The Father does not require Honour from his Son, merely because he needs it; but because he deserves it. The Master does not require Reverence from his Servant, merely because he needs it; but because he deserves it. And if the one should despise his Father, and the other treat his Master with Contempt, they would soon feel the Force of that Reasoning, in Mal. I. 6. *A Son honoureth his Father, and a Servant his Master: If then I be a Father, where is mine Honour? And if I be a Master, where is my Fear? saith the Lord of Hosts.* Ver. 8. *And if ye offer the Blind for Sacrifice, is it not Evil? And if ye offer the Lame and Sick, is it not Evil? Offer it now unto thy Governor, will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy Person? saith the Lord of Hosts.* Ver. 14. *Cursed be the Deceiver, which hath in his Flock a Male, and voweth and sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt Thing: For I am a* GREAT KING, *saith the Lord of Hosts.*

NOR

NOR is there any Way to eſtabliſh that Maxim, which yet lies at the Foundation of almoſt all the modern Schemes of Religion, but to prove, either that the Deity does not deſerve ſupreme Honour, or that the moral Governor of the World is not juſt. For if he deſerves it, he ought to have it. And it belongs to the moral Governor of the World to ſee Juſtice done, i. e. to ſee that every one has his due.

AND indeed it is the chief Happineſs of the Inhabitants of Heaven, to ſee God univerſally honoured, and each one to join to give him the Glory that is his due. They inceſſantly cry, *Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of Hoſts; the whole Earth is full of thy Glory.* (Iſai. VI. 3.) *They fall down before the Throne, and worſhip him that liveth for ever and ever, and caſt their Crowns before the Throne, ſaying, Thou art worthy to receive Glory, and Honour, and Power: for thou haſt created all Things; and for thy Pleaſure they are and were created.* (*Rev.* IV. 10, 11.)

IF the Honour of God is of infinite Importance in it ſelf—then it is infinitely deſirable for it ſelf—and then to ſee God honoured and exalted, will be of all Things moſt happifying to holy Intelligences—And that Plan which is ſuited to this, will be the moſt happifying Plan—And there may be the greateſt Degree of Happineſs on ſuch a Plan, and yet all Things be ſo contrived as that it may eternally appear in the moſt ſtriking Light, that there was ſomething God had an infinite Regard to, beſides the Happineſs of his Creatures——On this Hypotheſis all the Parts of God's preſent Plan may be accounted for.

BUT if the Honour of God is of no Importance in it ſelf—then it is not deſirable for it ſelf—nor will it be a happifying Sight, to ſee God exalted—nor that Plan that is ſuited to exalt God, a happifying

fying Plan—yea, no good End can be anſwered by ſuch a Plan—and ſo no Part of God's preſent Plan can be accounted for.

IF the Creature's Happineſs is the *only* Thing of Worth—then infinite Wiſdom and almighty Power ſhould be employed *only* to promote it—and the everlaſting Puniſhment of the Damned can anſwer *no good End:* as, on this Hypotheſis, none can deſerve it, nor can God deſire it, or any holy Being acquieſce in it, or receive any Inſtruction from it. * ——And why God ever permitted Sin or Miſery to enter into his World, will be abſolutely unaccountable: as will every Step God has taken with fallen Intelligences ever ſince Satan's Apoſtacy. For why did not God inſtantly reſtore fallen Angels and fallen Man, and immediately confirm them, if their Welfare was the *only* Thing of Worth?

IN a Word, I humbly conceive, this Poſition, that *the Welfare of Creatures is the only Thing of Worth, and the only Thing to be regarded by the moral Governour of the Univerſe*, is one of the moſt groundleſs, irrational, unſcriptural Poſitions, that ever was laid down; little, if any Thing ſhort of, nay, worſe than the groſſeſt Abſurdities practiſed by the *Heathen*. For what did they worſe than *worſhip and ſerve the Creature more than the Creator?* (*Rom.* I. 25) But on this Hypotheſis, the *Creature* alone *is to be ſerved*; and God himſelf, the glorious Creator is to become his almighty *Servant*; and to be loved *only* and merely for his Faithfulneſs in the Creature's Service:——The Creature has taken the Throne, and the Creator is become his Servant.——No Wonder, ſuch a Scheme ſuits the Heart of fallen Creatures. And its being ever broached, or ever received, in God's Dominions, by any of his Creatures, is a full Demonſtration, that they are fallen indeed.

(* See this proved in my *True Religion delineated*. P. 215.)

indeed. Yea, not only fallen, but sunk into so great Degeneracy and Delusion, as to think, that God himself is fallen too, and quite turned to be of their Side.——And now they love him, and think all is well! *Psalm.* L. 21. *Thou thoughtest I was altogether such a one as thy self.*——

BUT it is Time to proceed, as was proposed,

III. To make some practical Improvement of the whole. And,

1. WHAT has been said may be of use to assist us to form right Ideas of God. The Law gives us a true Picture of the moral Perfections of the divine Nature. God is exactly what the Law speaks him to be.——Yet the Gospel sets his moral Perfections in a still clearer Light: the Glory of God shines exceeding brightly in the Face of Jesus Christ.—But God's universal Plan comprehending Law and Gospel, and all God's Dispensations from the Foundation of the World to the final Consummation of all Things, sets his moral Character in the compleatest and most striking Point of Light; and puts us under vast Advantages, even in this present State, to make a swift Progress in the Knowledge of the Deity.——Indeed, had we that high Relish for divine Knowledge, that good Taste for divine Beauty, which they in Heaven have, our Proficiency might bear a great Resemblance to theirs.—But, Oh how stupid are we to divine Things! Having Eyes to see, and see not: Ears to hear, and hear not; neither do we understand: Hearts of Stone, that have no Feeling. We are even as Beasts before him. So that while his Glory shines all around us, we are in profound Darkness.—O for the Influences of the blessed Spirit, to awaken our Attention to the Manifestations he makes of himself, and to give us a true Taste and Relish to the Beauty of divine Things! Then would our Hearts be enlarged, to

love

love the Lord our God, and to fear him, and to walk in all his Ways, and to rejoice in the Wisdom of his universal Government. O for that blessed Day, when we shall receive the holy Spirit in a full and perfect Measure! Then shall we see no longer in this dark Manner, but as it were Face to Face. Shall in a Measure, at once, take in the Idea which God has exhibited of himself, and be ravished with the Wisdom, Glory and Beauty of his universal Plan.

2. WHAT has been said may be of use to assist us not only to form right Notions of all finite Intelligences, as being in their best Estate at an infinite Remove from Self-sufficiency and absolute Independence, the peculiar Prerogatives of him who alone is by Nature Immutable; but it may also be of special Use to assist us to just Notions of the true Character of Mankind now in their fallen State. Facts are stubborn Things. The steady Conduct of Mankind, from the Fall to this Day, gives their true Character beyond Dispute. Only think what they ought to be, perfectly in Love with God, and full of Love to one another; and see what their Conduct has always been towards God, and towards one another.—Towards God. *Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your Fathers did, so do ye. Which of the Prophets have not your Fathers persecuted? And they have slain them which shewed before of the Coming of the just* ONE; *of whom ye have been now the Betrayers and Murderers.* (*Act.* VII. 51, 52.)—Towards one another. *Living in Malice and Envy, hateful and hating one another.* (*Tit.* III. 3.)

Who live in Hatred, Enmity and Strife
Among themselves, and levy cruel Wars,
Wasting the Earth, each other to destroy:
As if (which might induce us to accord)
Man had not hellish Foes enough besides,
That Day and Night for his Destruction wait.
MILTON.

AND so obstinate in their sinful Ways, that in Fact no external Means have ever been able to reclaim them. So alienated from God, that no Arguments can persuade them to be reconciled. So that notwithstanding all the outward Means which have been used, yet still the World is as it was. The Christian Nations very little better, if so good, as some Heathen have been. (*Mat.* XII. 41.)

3. WHAT has been said may be of use to realize to us the infinitely evil Nature and dreadful Consequences of Sin. Let us view the Lake of Fire and Brimstone, and see what will be the Issue of the grand Rebellion. Sin has turned Angels into Devils, and banisht them from Heaven, and will confine them for ever to the burning Lake, with all their Adherents from this apostate World. Let us view God's Conduct towards Sin from the beginning of the World to the Consummation of all Things, and we may see how infinitely he hates it, and how resolved he is to suppress it.—Oh, how infinitely dreadful had been our Case in this fallen World, had a Saviour never been provided!

4. WHAT has been said tends to give us the sublimest Ideas of the divine Interposition on the Fall of Man, to defeat Satan's Designs, and bring infinite Good out of all the Evil that Satan intended. ——O the Depth of the Knowledge, Wisdom and Grace of God! Glorious in Holiness, fearful in Praises, doing Wonders! This Theme is worthy of eternal Contemplation, and will appear new and fresh and ravishing thro' eternal Ages, to all the blessed Inhabitants of the upper World: Especially, to the BRIDE, the LAMB'S WIFE. The Saved from among Men will have some Ideas and Joys quite peculiar to themselves, that even the Elect Angels will not intermeddle with: and *sing a new Song, that none can learn, but those who were redeemed from the Earth.* (*Rev.* XIV. 3.) 5. WHAT

5. WHAT infinite Madneſs are the Sons of Men guilty of, that they can be inattentive to all this glorious Grace, go on ſecure in Sin, and perſiſt in their Adherence to Satan's Intereſt, altho' they know that Satan and his Hoſts, & all his Adherents, are deſtin'd to the Lake of Fire and Brimſtone? "O poor, "blind, infatuated Creatures! to adhere to Satan, "our firſt Enemy, who ſo maliciouſly ſought our "total Ruin, deceived the happy Pair, and plunged "all this World in Woe! to adhere to him when "he ſtill deſigns your Ruin! to be deaf to the kind "Calls of the Son of God, who means to defeat "Satan's Deſigns, and has died in the Cauſe, and "now reigns in Heaven with the ſame Views, and "invites us all to ſubmit to his Government and "truſt in his Blood! And can you ſtill go on in "bold Defiance of almighty Vengeance? and make "a Jeſt of eternal Burnings?"——Oh, how horrid the Thought! infinitely horrid the Thought, that ſo many of the human Race are daily imprecating Damnation upon themſelves, calling upon God to damn their Souls to Hell! Poor Creatures, they little think what Damnation means! they little think what it is to fall into the Hands of the living God!—Who that loves God, or has any Compaſſion for immortal Souls, can think of the preſent blind and miſerable State of a fallen World, and not long for the bleſſed Day, when Satan ſhall be bound, and the Meſſiah reign on Earth?

6. BUT let me conclude the whole with an Addreſs to the ſpiritual Seed of Jacob.

As Jacob was in great Diſtreſs, when his Son's Coat, all beſmeared with Blood, was brought into his Preſence, and ſaid, "Surely he is rent in Pieces, "and I ſhall ſee him no more!" and afterwards when Simeon was left in Egypt, Things looked darker ſtill, "Joſeph is not, and Simeon is not, and

" now will ye take away Benjamin alſo ! all theſe " Things are againſt me !" and yet in the End, he ſaw the Wiſdom, Beauty and Glory of the whole Plan which God had laid: ſo ſhall it be here. How dark ſoever the preſent State of the World is, and how dark ſoever it has been for long Ages paſt, that it has hardly looked like God's World, but rather like a World where Satan reigns; and how impoſſible ſoever it may ſeem, that all ſhould iſſue well; yet we have the greateſt Reaſon to believe it will, and to rejoice in the Proſpect of that bleſſed Day.

FOR this is the very Plan which infinite Wiſdom choſe before all other poſſible Plans: the very Plan which God himſelf laid out—all the Parts laid out upon Deſign—every Thing adjuſted by infinite Wiſdom. The Whole, therefore, muſt be perfect in Wiſdom, Glory and Beauty; and will appear ſo, when once it is finiſhed.

LOOK through the leſſer Parts of God's great and univerſal Plan, his Diſpenſations to Jacob and Joſeph, to Moſes and the Iſraelites of old; theſe, although once very dark, are now full of Light, and eaſy to be underſtood. And if God's Works are wiſe and beautiful, ſo far as we can underſtand them, this argues the whole are ſo. For doubtleſs all are of a Piece, the Author being the ſame, and always acting like himſelf.

BESIDES, notwithſtanding the dreadful State of the World in our Day, and in all Ages paſt, there may be Time enough yet, before the Day of Judgment, for ſuch great Events as may put quite a new Face upon the whole. Nor need we doubt the Accompliſhment of theſe great Events, becauſe they have been ſo long delayed. It is God's Way to promiſe, and make his People wait; but he was never known to diſappoint their Expectations. To Adam he ſaid, *The Seed of the Woman ſhall bruiſe the Serpent's*

Serpent's Head. Adam lived above nine Hundred Years, and looked, and waited, and died. But it was above eleven Hundred Years after his Death before God ever so much as mentioned his antient Promise. All his Posterity on Earth, eight only excepted, destroyed, mean while, in the general Deluge. That some perhaps were ready to think, God had quite forgot his Promise.—Till in the Days of Abraham it was renewed ——Again they look, but still it does not come—but long dark Ages intervene, and his People are put to wait about two Thousand Years more.—And then behold, it is come! the joyful Day is come! *I bring you good Tidings of great Joy.* said the Angel, *for this Day the Saviour is born!*

I SEE not why the Predictions of the glorious Days are not as full and plain, as were the Predictions of the Messiah: nor why we may not as firmly believe the setting up of his Kingdom, as of old they believed his coming in the Flesh. It is certain, this is a great Objection of the Jews against our Jesus being the true Messiah, that the Things prophesied of the Messiah have never been fulfilled in him. That *the Nations should beat their Swords into Plow-shares, and their Spears into Pruning-hooks, and learn War no more. And that there should be nothing to hurt nor offend; the Knowledge of the Lord filling the Earth as the Waters do the Seas.* &c. &c. Nor do I see any possible Way to answer their Objection, but to say, These Things are still to be accomplished.

AND if they should be accomplished in all that GLORY, in which they are painted in the prophetic Descriptions, nothing hinders but that this Plan, of all possible Plans, may at last actually prove to be the best, in all Respects the best. Most for God's Glory, and most for the Good of the System too. Yea, so far as we are able to see, it seems, as if this must be the Case.

IT

IT is Matter of the greateſt Joy, that all the Affairs of the Univerſe are conducted by infinite Wiſdom. It is an Honour that belongs to God, to govern the World which he has made; to govern his own World; to lay out and order the Affairs of his own Family.—We think, we have a Right to lay out Schemes for our own Families, and ſhould take it ill if our Children or Servants ſhould diſpute our Right. Sovereign Monarchs in Time of War think they have a Right to lay out a Plan of Operation for an enſuing Campaign, and would take it ill if their Right ſhould be diſputed by a private Soldier. Much more has God a Right to lay out a univerſal Plan, for the Conduct of all Things in a World to which he has an original, underived, abſolute Right; nor can he look upon the Worm that dares diſpute his Right, but with infinite Contempt and Deteſtation.——And, O what Matter of infinite Joy it is, that he has taken this Work upon himſelf! Not left Things to the Devil's Controul, nor to be decided by the Luſts of an apoſtate World, nor left all Things to mere Chance; but himſelf in infinite Wiſdom has laid out a univerſal Plan, a Plan perfect in Glory and Beauty.——No Mortal, that loves his Plan, will think of diſputing his Right to lay it. And no Mortal, that loves God himſelf, that loves his Law, and loves his Goſpel, can be an Enemy to his univerſal Plan. For they all partake of the ſame Nature, and ſhine forth in the ſame Kind of Beauty, *Holy, Juſt* and *Good*.

O YE Seed of Jacob, Joſeph is ſafe, and Benjamin is ſafe:—the Honour of God is ſafe, and the Good of the Syſtem is ſafe; all is in good Hands, and under the Conduct of infinite Wiſdom. For *the Counſel of the Lord ſhall ſtand, and he will do all his Pleaſure.* (Iſai. XLVI. 10.) Wherefore ſet your Hearts

Hearts at Rest. For let the State of the World and of the Church look ever so dark, you may safely *trust in the Lord*, and *stay your selves upon your God*, who is engaged in Honour to conduct all well. And for his GREAT NAME'S SAKE, he will not fail to do it. (See *Ezek.* XX.) You, therefore, may with the utmost Serenity leave the Government of the World with him, and put an implicit Faith in his Wisdom and Fidelity, and have nothing to do, but your Duty. Nothing, but to attend upon the Business he has marked out for you. Like a faithful Soldier in an Army, who trusts his *General* to conduct Affairs, while he devotes himself to mind the Business he is set about: And the more he rejoices in the Wisdom of his *General*, the more alert will he be in discharging the Duties of a Soldier. Wherefore, *Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I say, Rejoice.*——Let this be your first Maxim, *The Lord reigneth*: and this your Practice, *Let the Earth rejoice*, (Psal. XCVII. 1.)

BUT it must be with an holy Joy. With such a Joy as results from a supreme Love to God, and Hatred of Sin, as an infinite Evil. With such a Joy as St. Paul describes, 1 Cor. XIII. 6. *Charity rejoiceth not in Iniquity, but in the Truth.* For no other Joy will answer to the Nature of God's universal Plan, which is altogether suited to exalt the Deity, and set Sin in an infinitely odious Point of Light, and to cause *Truth* and *Right* universally to take Place.

THERE are some *who say they are Jews, and are not, but are of the Synagogue of Satan*; who say, they trust in the Lord, while at the same Time, *the Name of God is blasphemed* through their unrighteous and ungodly Lives. So once there was a mixt Multitude came out of Egypt, and joined in the general Joy at the Side of the Red Sea, merely from selfish Views; but the Lord knew how to try them; and their Joy ere long was turned to Murmuring. For their

Hearts

Hearts were not right with God: and their Carcaſes fell in the Wilderneſs.

O YE Seed of Jacob, Trials, many Trials are yet to be expected, dark and gloomy Days, while the dawning Light of the glorious Morning comes gradually on. Get ready therefore for Trials. Be willing, that *all Fleſh ſhould be brought low, and that the Lord alone ſhould be exalted.* (Iſa. II. 17.) *Seek Meekneſs, ye Meek of the Earth, for it may be, ye may be hid in the Day of the Lord's Anger.* (Zeph. II. 3.) *For, behold, the Day cometh that ſhall burn as an Oven, and all the Proud, yea, all that do wickedly ſhall be Stubble; and the Day that cometh ſhall burn them up, ſaith the Lord of Hoſts, that it ſhall leave neither Root nor Branch: But unto you that fear my Name, ſhall the Sun of Righteouſneſs ariſe with healing in his Wings,* (Mal. IV. 1, 2.) *Many ſhall run to and fro, and Knowledge ſhall be increaſed,* (Dan. XII. 4.) *Many ſhall be purified and made white, and tried: but the Wicked ſhall do wickedly: and none of the Wicked ſhall underſtand, but the Wiſe ſhall underſtand.* (Ver. 10.) Bleſſed is that Man, who ſhall overcome all Trials, and be true to the Meſſiah's Intereſt thro' all Changes, for *he ſhall ſtand in his Lot at the End of the Days,* in the general Aſſembly of the Juſt in Heaven. (Ver. 13.) *Watch, therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to eſcape all thoſe Things that ſhall come to paſs, and to ſtand before the Son of Man.* (Luk. XXI. 36.)

HUMILITY, Self-Diffidence, entire Dependence on God, the inward Source of conſtant Watchfulneſs and Prayer, perfectly become us, & are exactly ſuited to the State of Things in the intellectual Syſtem. Satan a glorious Arch-angel fell—Adam the Father of the human Race fell—all Mankind now in a fallen State—the Powers of Darkneſs determined on our Ruin. No Room, therefore is left for Pride, Self-Confidence, Self-Dependence. Hell is our proper

perDue: and free Grace through Jesus Christ, our only Hope. Snares and Dangers are all around us. *Watch and Pray*, therefore, *that ye enter not into Temptation.*

GOD is the only Being by Nature immutably Good. Were we innocent, we might possibly fall; and God would be unobliged to hold us up. Now we are Sinners, now we are already fallen Creatures, there is no Hope in our Case, but we shall totally and finally fall if left to ourselves, and as certainly perish as we now exist. And whither shall we look for Help? but to the only immutable Being. And how? but thro' the Merits and Mediation of Christ; being infinitely unworthy that God should hold us up. And yet our eternal Interest lies all at Stake.

" O THOU FATHER of our Spirits, amidst ten " Thousand Dangers, apostate, self-ruined, self-" destroyed, helpless, Hell our Due, we look to " Thee! O help us! O hold us up! O keep us " by thy Power, thro' Faith unto Salvation; to the " Glory of thy free Grace thro' Jesus Christ! Amen.

NOW to him, who loved us and gave himself for us, to him be Glory, Honour and Praise, for ever and ever. AMEN.

F I N I S.

E R R A T A.

In the Preface, Page 1. Line 4 from the Bottom, for *accountable*, Read *unaccountable*.

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